

Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

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MARCH, 1953

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ACOLONIAL JEWEL ON A PAVED HIGHWAY

SAN MIGUEL ALLENDE, in the state of Guanajuato and 229 miles northwest from Mexico City, is one of the towns that had to be included in the highway program of modern Mexico because of its unique appeal to tourists and students.

The present San Miguel Allende was founded by Spaniards, but very near the present town are to be found the remains of the original Amerindian site, known as Izcuinapan.

A few years after the Spanish Conquest by Hernán Cortés, in 1521, the adventuring Franciscan monk, Fray Juan de San Miguel, founded on the outskirts of Izcuinapan the town known then as San Miguel el Grande, and the first church was constructed there by his order.

The construction of the present monumental church was started during the first years of the 18th century.

The name San Miguel el Grande was changed in the 19th century to San Miguel Allende, in honor of Ignacio Allende, one of the principal leaders of Mexico's struggle for freedom from Spain.

Built on a hillside, San Miguel Allende has uneven and winding streets, which is one of its charms. Its altitude of 7,340 feet gives it a mild and pleasant climate.

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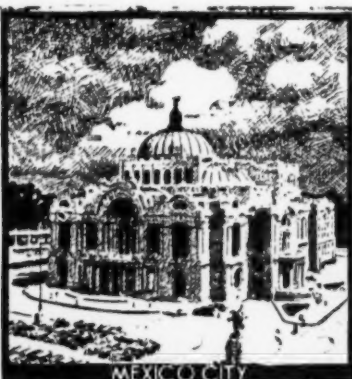
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS

EDITOR

The Village and the City

IT IS hardly necessary to delve deeply into Mexican reality in order to perceive that its basic social and economic problems stem from the one underlying problem, which is that of the wide gulf in cultural and material standards that separates the minority of city dwellers from the indigenous rural majority. This lack of a social and economic homogeneity, of a national common denominator, this wide disparity between the native village and the modern city, has defined the great barrier which has impeded throughout its entire history this country's progress toward democratic self-rule and an equitable economy. This wide and anachronistic cleavage in the living conditions and cultural development of its population has, moreover, barred the way toward a complete national integration.

For this reason, "to redeem the Indian masses from poverty and ignorance" has been the salient cause of the Mexican Revolution and the aim of progressive legislation during the past three decades. Each succeeding administration has furthered the program of community land distribution; each has done its ample share in building highways and irrigation systems, and each has contributed toward stamping out illiteracy by increasing the number of rural schools. This sustained constructive program has set the pace of national progress. It has enlarged the scope of national economy; it has elevated to some extent the living standards among the indigenous masses, and it has been thereby gradually creating the means of an ultimate integration.

New highways and railways, traversing vast and hitherto isolated regions, have brought elementary notions of civilized life to backward millions. Communication with the outside world is arousing curiosity and ambition, eagerness to travel and the will to emulate among people who have never known a life superior their own or a world beyond the margins of space which could be covered on foot or the back of a burro. Constructive progress is palpably beginning to affect existence in many parts of rural Mexico, and in the course of years may finally destroy the barrier.

But the solution of the problem has not been entirely left to the normal course of progress. The succeeding governments have also sought to attack the problem directly, to encounter the means of filling the gulf between the village and the city.

When some twenty-five years ago the administration of President Calles undertook the first practical steps toward filling this gulf, among other projects a school was created in Mexico City for Indian students who were brought from different regions of the country to undergo a special course which would prepare them for the task of cultural missionaries upon their return to their native villages. These students were carefully selected, and were schooled, lodged and boarded at government expense.

The basic idea pursued by this school was to provide these Indian youths not only with an elementary schooling but to teach them the civilized customs of city life, so that eventually they might be able to pass their knowledge and acquired customs to their primitive townsmen. It was stipulated that upon his graduation each student would return to his respective community and assume the task of teacher and cultural guide.

But the idea, unfortunately, did not work out in practice, due to the reason that once the young Indians had acquired the customs of city life they were averse to give them up and to resume the primitive existence in their native villages. Thus upon leaving school they either remained in the city or returned thereto after a brief sojourn in their native village. The idea, in other words, turned out to be wrong for it brought the village to the city, and was hence abandoned for the much sounder idea of bringing the city to the village.

In keeping with this idea, a number of cultural centers, maintained by state governments, are functioning in various regions of the Republic, where the Indians are not only taught to read and write but how to improve their general living standards. These centers do not take the Indians away from their native surroundings; they teach them how to make life better within these surroundings.

In this connection, the most important center of this kind (amply described in an article by Bernardine Bailey which was published in our last month's issue) was created through the initiative and cooperation of the UNESCO at Patzcuaro, in the state of Michoacán. This center, drawing upon a territory of twenty villages, pursues the aim of fundamental education, which is that of teaching the essential minimum of practical information needed by human beings in their own region and country. The Center at Patzcuaro was designed to work out methods of helping the people to understand their immediate problems, and to give them the skills to solve these problems through their own efforts. It teaches thousands of Tarascan Indians such elementary techniques of civilization as how to boil water for drinking, how to disinfect their seed, how to graft fruit trees scientifically, exterminate insects that damage their crops, store corn safely against pests and rot, plan and lay out a town park, organize cooperatives for economical buying and selling, and—most important—read and write.

This Center, created by UNESCO as an experimental laboratory and to serve as an example for similar centers to be established in the Far East, the Middle East, India and Equatorial Africa, will undoubtedly also serve as an example for the Mexican government in its own endeavours to lift the Indian masses from an age-long static existence and to create an integrated and homogeneous civilization.

Filemona

By Sylvia Martin

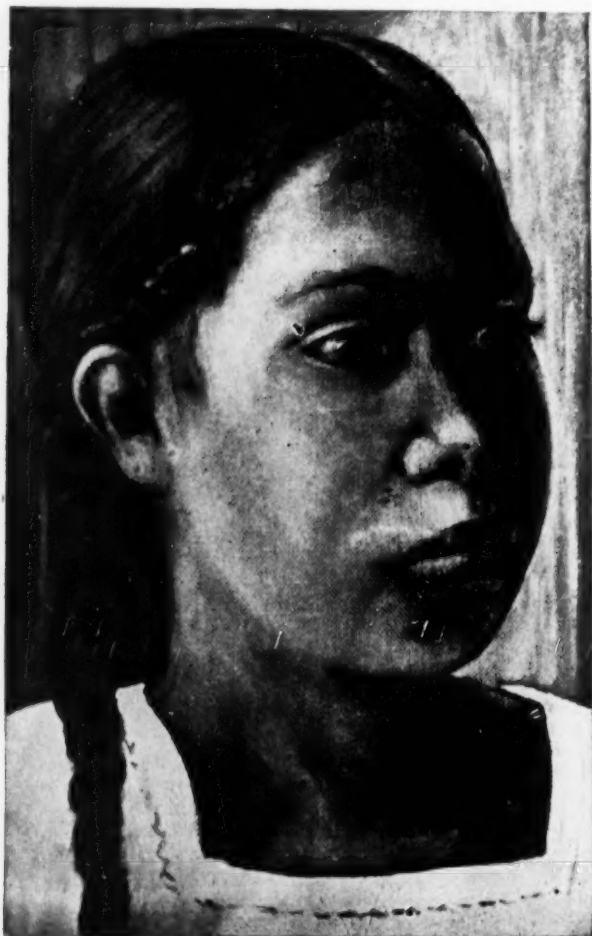
THIS was our first day in Cuernavaca. While my husband paid off the cargador, I stood on the porch, knee deep in baggage, and looked at my new world. From wintry Chicago I had come to roses and calla lilies and a swimming pool which reflected the delicate jacaranda blossoms growing overhead. It was all my garden, and beyond it, across the ravine, shone the candy-colored town, and beyond that the majestic Three Peaks stood out against a sky of purest blue.

The sun was mellow, the air scented with jasmine. I took a deep breath, and heard a low voice at my elbow: "Buenos días, Señora. I am the maid."

She was doll-like. I marveled that so much womanliness could be contained in such a small package. Then as she handed me a note I saw that her fingernails were black with dirt.

"Filomena is an ignorant little Otomí," my house agent had written. "Scrape along with her until I can find you someone better."

The technicolored scene went grey. I felt that I was a stranger in a strange land. Young, still new to marriage and homemaking, I had never had a servant. Here was one I could barely communicate with. And an Indian! What habits would she have? She might feed us roasted locusts, or spit into the soup for luck.



Oil.

By Otto Butterlin.

In my ears rang the warning of an old American resident: "You can't trust these Mexican servants. They're lazy, disloyal. They live like animals and don't want to live any better. When you've been here as long as I have..."

Filemona, I discovered later, was having her own anxieties. She had taken in laundry, but this was her first chance at a real job. With eyes cast down, hands tightly clasped, she was probably breathing a prayer to the Virgin that the foreign lady would accept her.

The foreign lady looked at her helplessly and stammered in gringo Spanish, "Can you cook?"

How should she know, who had lived on tortillas and beans all her life? But she said, "Sí, Señora," and added, on sudden inspiration, "I can make kidneys in wine." She had heard of this as a dish pleasing to foreigners.

"Oh," said the lady. Then, "Filemona, cleanliness is very important. La limpieza, you know—very, very important..."

"Sí, Señora."

There was an awkward pause.

"Está bien?" she ventured at last.

"Yes. Sí."

The Otomí are among Mexico's backward tribes. Filemona had never been taught reading, or writing, or personal cleanliness. She had never known anything but a dirt-floor environment. I did not guess that then. It took me seven years to understand.

I did know that Filemona was a problem. She was not clean, and as a cook she was even worse than I. A dozen times I rehearsed, "Filemona, I am sorry but you must go," checking the words in the dictionary. They were never said. She was so shy and breathless to please, so absurdly dignified, so lovely!

There was the practical side of my reluctance, too. In my modern house the kitchen was primitive. Charcoal stove, earthenware vessels, mortar and pestle of lava stone—these were the cooking tools Cortés had found four hundred and more years ago. Filemona could perform prodigies with them, but to me they were so many museum pieces.

She was tireless. She marketed, prepared the meals, and cleaned a six-room house. If I so much as made my bed, she gave me to understand without words that I had injured her fierce pride in her work. Twelve hours a day she worked, for as many dollars a month.

So that when she made her mistakes I forbore to complain. Soon I found that she was learning by what we left on our plates and by example. When I washed my hands in the kitchen before touching food, it became a rite with her.

And I discovered something that took me for the first time beyond my house and garden. Filemona's husband Alberto, who was gardener in the villa next door, opposed her working for the foreigner. Subtly, by means of a whispering campaign among the other servants of his villa, Filemona tried to make Alberto feel that a woman who worked for Americans took on a special social status which was transferred to her husband.

Alberto's domineering old mother, meanwhile, was telling him that his wife was becoming too independent, that he was losing his supremacy as lord and master. The fact that Filemona earned more than

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Water Color.

By Myrtle Frankovitz.

To Alamos for the Mail

By John W. Hilton

SOMEWHERE I once read a passage that runs something like this: "The ghost of romance clad in shining armor rides silently beside every lone horseman in the hills." This may seem too poetic, but there is something special about striking out alone on horseback over an interesting trail. It took quite a bit to educate the natives and the folks at the ranch, to convince everyone concerned that, at least on trails I knew, I did not require the services of a mozo to trot ahead of my horse all the way.

Since it is customary, I still take one along on trips to areas where I am not known, but the folks around Guirocoba and Alamos have finally accepted my desire to travel alone, with such other eccentricities as collecting snakes and cactus seeds. They have a belief that the Saints take special pains in guarding the feeble-minded, so I rather doubt if they worry a great deal about my welfare.

This particular morning, I had decided to ride into Alamos to see if I had any mail. The only delivery was by runner, during the rainy season, and there had been no one out our way for several weeks. It would give me a chance to see just how much the country had changed with the coming of the rains, and to visit my friends, the Dows, for a couple of days.

It had rained hard the afternoon before, and now the sun sparkled from millions of wet leaves. The scent of unnamed flowers and damp rich earth filled the air. Birds were singing in the trees, and even in broad daylight a many-toned chorus of frogs rose from the ponds by the wayside, now and then punctuated by the great turtles, croaking in their deep bass "Juan—Juan—Juan—". The farmers say they are thanking Saint John for bringing the rain. Without knowing when I began it, I found myself humming a little tune to the rhythm of my horse's hoofs, clop-clopping on the soft wet earth.

I passed a couple of boys, riding burros to work in the fields, and their cheery greeting and friendly smiles added to the pleasure of the bright new morning. It is always a source of amusement to me to see the way these kids ride a burro, perched precariously on the very rear end of their long-eared mounts.

A little farther on, I saw others working early in their fields, trying to get the final weeding done and their corn "laid by" for the season. They all waved or called merrily from their tasks, and strengthened the feeling that I have always had, that Mexicans, as a people, are one of the friendliest in the world.

Presently, I heard the roar of water ahead, and, coming round a bend, I could see a stretch of rapids in the arroyo. It looked like a permanent rushing mountain torrent, flashing and boiling over its rocky bed. Lining the sides were a large species of white amaryllis in full bloom. It was hard to believe that all of this water was temporary, and that, with the rainy season over, these arroyos would be dry except for the deep tanks and pools at the bases of waterfalls.

At La Puerta (the lower limit of the ranch) the same little girl who always runs out to open the gates was waiting and smiling. She had the bars half down by the time I got there, and was ready with her "Gracias, Señor." For the usual nickel that I gave her.

Just past the gate, I heard quite a commotion in the brush, near the trail, and I pulled up to see what it was all about. I knew that most of the noise was the common call of a group of redheaded parrots, but there was intermixed with this a peculiar wheezy squawk that was harder to identify. It took careful looking to locate the green birds in their perch of green leaves, but when I finally spotted them I saw an amusing sight.

The peculiar wheezy sound came from a baby parrot that was being fed by his mother, and the balance

came from his brothers and sisters who were lined up on the limb, waiting for their turn. When I say baby, I am not referring to something tiny and downy.

These parrots continue to feed their young, by regurgitation, long after they are full-grown and able to fly. The youngster, whose feathers are ruffled with the excitement of being fed, looks, actually, bigger than the mother as he opens his mouth, flaps his wings and gulps, between the funny wheezy sounds. Once you have heard this noise, there is no chance of ever mistaking it; yet I find it very hard to describe.

A little farther on, a flight of tiny green parrots shot out from the brush and wheeled overhead, turning and banking in precise flight, like a well trained squadron of airmen. Then they settled into a wild fig tree and disappeared as completely as if they had entered a cave. They were just about the size and exactly the color of the leaves. The natives call these tiny parrots "catolinas," and make cute pets of them.

I have never seen any in the States, but I should imagine they would be very popular among bird collectors, if some doctor hadn't invented psittacosis. Now it is virtually impossible to import any members of this family of birds, and on the strength of a few cases of a disease that has never been proved to exist in wild parrots.

The little settlement of Cajon looked like a movie set in the brilliant morning light. The thatched houses with picket fences or sharpened posts, clustered on the hill among the giant, many-armed cacti, looked as if the settlement had been deliberately planned for artistic effect, instead of just happening that way. The men were all in the fields, and the town was almost deserted. One old lady nodded in a doorway. A skinny white dog got up from a shady spot in my trail, and an old sow grunted placidly on somebody's front porch, as she nursed her numerous brood.

There was plenty of life, however, down at the arroyo. It must have been community washday. Most of the female population was gathered, washing their clothes on rocks at the edge of the great pool. A flock of naked children played and splashed while their mothers or sisters washed their clothes. Over all was a chatter of gossip that would have put even a bridge club to shame, back home. They were all making such a noise that they did not see me, at first. Then, suddenly, a silence fell; followed by a blinding rush of tangled arms, legs, and spray; as the older girls, who were in swimming, took to deep water. The little boys at the other end of the tank just stood and stared at the "Gringo."

The girls, from the safety of neck-deep water, dared me to take their pictures, and their mothers and older sisters smiled and answered my greetings, as I passed. I had hardly ridden to the top of the next hill before I heard the noise resumed: the shouting of boys at play; the peculiar drumlike sound that the girls make by striking the water; and, over all, the hum of resumed gossip, augmented, doubtless, by conjectures as to why I was riding to town.

The flowers seemed to get thicker and more brilliant as I traveled, especially the various sorts of morning-glories. I counted nine quite distinct species in about a mile; ranging from giant ground morning-glories with six-inch flowers, snow-white and lavender, through tree-climbing varieties of almost every size and hue, even the odd "Flor de San Miguel." This latter is a longthroated morning-glory with a small brick-red blossom and leaves that are the shape of a valentine heart. It is an odd and beautiful sight to see a giant cactus, completely covered with purple or dark-blue morning-glories from base to towering tip.

Another odd sight was the sudden appearance of many colored patches in the trail, from time to time. As I approached these patches, I was surprised to see that they were made up of, literally thousands of

beautiful butterflies, which would sail up and circle me in a cloud as I approached. Sometimes they were so thick as to be disconcerting to the horse. My second and greatest surprise, however, came when I discovered that the attraction that had gathered these lovely creatures together was a pile of fresh cow manure. I had to scare up several patches of butterflies, with the same results each time, before I was ready to admit to myself that, in this land of abundant flowers, they should be attracted to such a bait. The reason still remains a mystery to me.

The village of Laboreita was also almost deserted. People waved from the fields as I passed, and called out a cheery adios. I like the way this little village perches on its hill, and have painted a picture of part of it against a huge thunder cloud.

When I finally reached Agua Blanca I was beginning to get thirsty, so I stopped and asked a lady in the village if I might have a drink. She invited me to get down from my horse, and a little girl fetched a chair while her mother dipped me a drink from the family olla. The drink and short rest refreshed me, and I was soon on my way with the ancient and beautiful "Vaya con Dios" ringing in my ears. This phrase, introduced by the first padres into Mexico, still remains the standard farewell to the traveler. To me it seems to embody all of the friendliness and hospitality of these people.

A little farther on, I saw the well where the town of Agua Blanca gets its water. I stopped and drew some for the horse to drink. The water was probably all right, for it looked clear enough in a drinking gourd, but in the well it had the appearance of the scapy-gray-green stuff mother used to drain out of her washing machine, after doing the dark clothes. The horse liked it however, and I was thankful that I had taken typhoid antitoxin before I came to Mexico.

As the day wore on, the horse seemed to gradually slow down, and the sun got hotter and hotter. To top this off, the trail was much wider here and the trees shorter, so we were traveling in the open sun most of the time. It seemed that we would never reach the Cuchuhaqui arroyo, where I intended to eat and take a siesta. I think the horse was getting pretty thirsty by then; and I know that I was.

Finally we topped a rise and I could hear the roar of the water below. The horse heard and smelled it too, for he quickened his steps. Soon we were descending the last rocky incline and stopping at the water's edge. The horse could hardly wait till I had taken his bridle off to drink, and, as soon as I did, I lay flat on my stomach beside him and drank from the cool stream of rain water, with almost as much abandon as he.

Tying my horse in a shady patch of grass, I loosened the saddle cinches and left him to a well earned rest and a meal. A little farther down the canyon, I stopped, where a large tree shaded a bare stretch of rock beside a still pool, and took a refreshing bath. Then I ate my lunch and stretched out on the flat rock, to take my siesta. The sound of a rushing little rapid, at the head of the pool, soon lulled me to a restful sleep.

I think I had slept for about an hour when I was awakened by the sound of voices and of hoofs, striking rough rock. An old man and his two daughters were riding down the trail, toward the arroyo, and they looked as tired as I had been. The old man rode a sad-looking mule, and the girls rode sidesaddle on a donkey. They disappeared in the undergrowth of the arroyo, and I judged, from the sounds, that the girls were taking a bath. Presently, I saw that the old man had come a discreet distance below the girls, and was also getting ready to bathe. I lost all interest in the party at this point, for suddenly I heard a splash that

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Photo.

By Leopoldo Treviñac.

Popo or Bust

By Gordon H. MacDougall

MOST PILGRIMAGES IN MEXICO are associated with the veneration of some saint, but there is one that honors the Discoverer of America and seems more like an excursion than a religious procession. This, the most curious Columbus Day celebration in the world, is a mass climb to the smoking crater of Mt. Popocatepetl, which soars over the Valley of Mexico to an altitude of almost eighteen thousand feet. Strangely enough, the custom is seldom heard of outside Mexico except for an occasional news item when the ascent is marred by fatalities.

Each year, on the eve of October 12, more than four hundred people, many without any previous climbing experience, start out on the overnight trek up the side of the volcano. When I made the trip, the hikers were a motley crew of lawyers, doctors, businessmen, farmers, students, taxi drivers, housewives, a few children, and men from many other American and European countries, climbing on their own or representing various alpinist clubs. Usually fewer than fifty of the starters succeed in reaching the top, but even those who barely inch their way up as far as the snow line still have an exciting time of it.

Climbers who are in good condition and do not suffer from altitude complications can scale the cone in less than eight hours. Starting time has to be calculated carefully to fit weather conditions. Fortunately, the weather in the Valley of Mexico is obligingly systematic. Almost every afternoon about two, a storm develops over Popocatepetl and its sister volcano, Ixtaccihuatl. This occurs more regularly in summer than in winter, but an afternoon storm is still quite likely in October. For this reason most of the climbers leave the base camp at Tlamacas, above Amecameca, at three o'clock in the morning, in order to reach the crater and be down again by the time the storm

strikes. They spend the night before in cars or tents at the base camp, at an altitude of almost thirteen thousand feet.

The first part of the climb is deceptively easy. For a short distance there is a dirt road once used by sulphur gatherers, and the slope is gradual. Despite the altitude, even the uninitiated can walk a hundred yards without resting. This is fortunate, because the climb begins in darkness, with the aid of torches. It soon takes on the mystical aspect of a religious procession, as the climbers in single file form an almost unbroken line of flickering lights from Tlamacas up to La Cruz, where the trail turns sharply toward the crater and suddenly becomes much steeper. Most of the pilgrims reach this point, but don't get much farther. Here at La Cruz (14,100 feet), the Mexican Red Cross sets up its main first-aid station, since this is where the altitude and strain begin to tell on the climbers, and it is a convenient center for evacuating casualties to less rarefied air. The first-aid stations are simply tents carried up the slope by the leading climbers. This effort often exhausts a good mountaineer to the point where he cannot complete the ascent. The stations are manned by volunteers who are expert climbers as well as first-aid men. Of course, they are more interested in preventing accidents than in carrying someone down the mountain on a stretcher. One of their big problems is setting up the tents, for the volcanic ash offers little support, and a high wind may further complicate the operation.

By the time the sun has risen, all but the stragglers will have passed the critical La Cruz turn, and if the atmosphere is right they will see a breathtaking sight. It begins with a barely perceptible glow above the horizon in the direction of Veracruz. As the light cuts through the mist down into Puebla Valley, the peaks of Orizaba and Malinche appear in silhouette against a

crimson sky. The sun's heat takes the edge off the below-freezing chill. The sun is doxably welcome, for at this altitude the pace of climbing is too slow to warm the body.

As far as La Cruz, no special equipment is required. This point can be reached in ordinary street clothes. Beyond the turn, you begin to need crampons, goggles, and a pick or piolet. Since spikes provide a firm footing on the ice, experienced climbers prefer to follow the ice fields that jut down into the ravines rather than wallow in the volcanic ash of the ridges. Ice and snow make the goggles an absolute necessity to prevent snow-blindness, and the climber's entire head must be covered with a sort of ski cap against the danger of severe sunburn in this thin, clear air. The pick may seem like a lot of weight to carry, but the Red Cross attendants insist that it may mean the difference between reaching the crater and being picked up in a basket at the foot of the cone. It isn't difficult to gather enough downward momentum to reach a point of no return, and the pick at least assures the climber a clutching chance. There was a time when Indian guides used to bring tourists up to the snowline and let them slide downhill on fiber mats. The authorities have discouraged this practice, because more than one visitor rolled all the way to the bottom without benefit of mat.

* * *

In addition to the weather deadline, there is another reason for trying to reach the top as early as possible. As the day warms up, stones melt loose from the ice and fall away. A good-sized rock may travel all the way from the rim to the base of the cone and is apt to follow an erratic path. This danger is announced by the word *pedra*, shouted by the people above in the long round tones of a Swiss yodeler. The safest procedure in such a crisis, according to the experts, is to stand still with the handle end of the piolet firmly stuck in the sand in the direction of the stone.

Then you hope it will go whistling by you and not through you.

The nearer a climber gets to the rim of the crater, the more conscious he becomes of the fact that most of the people around him are either lying down or leaning on their picks in sheer exhaustion. Mexico City people are accustomed to a 7,500-foot elevation, but even they have a rough time at around fifteen thousand feet. At such altitudes most people experience a certain dizziness, frequently followed by a splitting headache. Up around seventeen thousand feet even the best climbers take only three or four steps at a time, then pause about thirty seconds, waiting for a delayed reaction—heavy breathing and violent thumping of heart and temples. It requires a lot of breathing up there to take in the oxygen you need for a few steps. At this level most of the people have gone as far as they are going and simply lie or sit down to regain their strength. When I was making the climb, an electrifying rumor was whispered about that three climbers had fallen down the treacherous northern slope and another had died of suffocation, freezing, or both. After this it was impossible not to give a more-than-casual look at the inert bodies scattered over the ice in positions that didn't make it clear whether they were suffering from simple fatigue or rigor mortis.

Inside, the crater's sharp rim slopes down abruptly for about twenty feet. Then there is a straight drop into the pit. At least two makeshift crosses on the rim bear witness that more than one climber has scrambled over the edge only to find himself sliding helplessly down over loose ash into the crater far below.

A look into the crater fully compensates all the effort expended in reaching the rim. At the bottom of its deep, bell-shaped cavity lies a beautiful emerald-green—the highest body of liquid water in the world. The volcano has been inactive since the last eruption in 1921. The smoke that curls up into a trailing plume

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Old Woman Sitting in the Sun

By Mary L. Inman

NO life drags on in the shuttered heart;
The mind gropes back through memory's loss
To memories of Never-was,
Where voices, shapes, old music dart
Like shimmering fish in a cavernous sea
With never a forward wave,
Only the swell of a darkling past
That surges endlessly.

Gray monolith of time,
Passive, petrified, still, in your deep unknowing!
The children's cries in their lusty play
Pass you by like a white wind blowing,
Blowing the brooding clouds apart;
But no light falls on the hooded brain,
On the shuttered heart.



Photo.

By Tomás Lerdo.

December Evening in Taxco

By Hudson Strobe

FROM Cuernavaca to Taxco the road runs through the heart of Mexico's sugar bowl before it begins to climb into the savage beauty of mountainous Guerrero. The December landscape was exalted with all the radiance of the sun. The cane was in seed and tossing its ethereal plumes proudly. The plain looked as if massed with a green-armored soldiery wearing aigrettes in their casques. Nopal cacti were festooned with marning-glories, the electric-blue color of incandescent globes used in Christmas decorations, spice pinks, and poinsettias. Front yards of humble peasant houses were aflame with red carnations. Some settlements were bathed in a cherry-colored glow from the heavy shade of royal poinciana trees. Without holly or mistletoe, subtropical nature had decorated the Christmas season lavishly in its own way.

To the left rose the stacks of a huge co-operative sugar mill established for the benefit of the peasants at considerable cost to the Government. Farther on, Indians at their task of road-mending invariably paused in their work to admire Petronchka, who kept up

a constant waving out the window with her front paws, as if she were doing a water race. The men rarely noticed us, it was always the dog; and they saluted Petronchka respectfully, with smiles and rough affection.

Juniper-suited men with wide flopping hats were laboring in the rice paddies. Along the twisting highway, children trotted beside burros bearing bales of dry brush. A man sitting astride his flopeared ass came from the opposite direction, with his woman walking demurely behind him. I was reminded of the chivalrous American who stopped a similar couple in a similar situation, to demand why the woman did not ride. "But, señor," explained the surprised man ingratiatingly, but with simplest logic, "my wife does not own a burro."

We slowed down to a stop where a group of Indians stripped to the waist were busy at a critical stretch of road-mending. Their torsos of copper, sculptured by the sun and hard labor, were strong and supple. The men smiled as we passed—showing their whi-

te teeth, which continual corn meal cakes kept polished and gleaming. The hands that gripped the work implements were small and delicately molded, and the feet in the open sandals were small too. But these fellows could carry loads on their backs that would stagger a husky stevedore.

Every sharp curve in the climbing road seemed to echo a plea for the most expert driving.

"The ravines of Mexico are a feast to the eye, but a calamity to agriculture," a Mexican companion had pointed out to me in conversation only the day before. And here, as I looked at the resentful, arid soil of some mountainsides laid in cultivated rows with what must have been superhuman labor and danger to life and limb, my admiration for the Mexican peasant was profound. I marveled how anything beside an eagle could ever get to such inaccessible places. A man cultivating his mountain slope was leaning at an extraordinary angle to keep from hurtling to jagged death. Surely in all the world there would be no greater outlays of human energy and pluck for such scanty returns.

No wonder the revolutionaries had chorused "Liberty and Land," "Land and Water." Where men had the courage to try to wrest subsistence from a grudging mountainside, what might they not do in irrigated land or in coastal swamps that had been drained? One thing was as clear as the silhouette of the man and his ox pressing against the mountain just under its rim: The Indian in Mexico will endure. In a race that can almost make bread out of stones the life force is so compulsive that no matter how tribulations stalk a fellow of his kind will survive. There is an indestructibility in the Indian make-up that attests to the good human material the Reform had to work with. The hopelessness which D. H. Lawrence said everyone who visited Mexico went away with did not seem hopeless at all this day in late December. I saluted with humility the plowing Indian's persistent will to live.

After the stretch of gray rock monotones, the road seemed to writhe with sinuities. Then suddenly, around a palisade, the twin towers of Taxco's famous church appeared, in the first flush of sunset, and there across the barranca the Hotel Borda sat atop a silver mine in full operation. Spread upon the fawn-pink flanks of the Sierra Madre, Taxco is like a town in fairy tale. It is the nonpareil of mining camps and trading posts. The viceregal flavor of the place has been preserved by a wise law which ensures it against the opportunism of modernity. The National Department of Colonial Monuments has decreed that no structure can be erected, no reparations begun, until Federal sanction has been stamped on the plans. New buildings, additions, gates, walls, doors, balconies, must harmonize with the architecture that existed in colonial days. No colors that "cry out" may be applied to house walls or railings. If one of the sienna tiles from a house roof is broken, it is replaced by another made by the same eighteenth-century process, because the tilemakers of Taxco have learned no new way.

The colors of Taxco vary by the changing lights from dawn to sunset but the patina and an iridescence are always there. The predominant tones are oyster-white, amber, soft amethyst, and olive, with the round of cerulean blue in the tiled dome of the great church. But after he has left ask anyone what is the color of Taxco, and he is just as apt to say "Opal," or "Rust," "Chamois." The profusion of flowers and blossoming vines, tumbling over pastel-shaded walls and spilling out of patio gateways, blurs the color impression.

Directions are blurred, too, in Taxco; none is

exact. There is no east, west south, or north. There is up or down or around or behind or above. The houses spill over the mountainside, one man's front door seeming to open on another man's roof. The cascading roads paved with small cobblestones stop their daring gambols at the plaza, where the market wares are spread under the glossy foliage of Indian laurel trees.

The church "which Borda gave to God because God gave to Borda" is memorable and distinctive viewed from any angle—from any hillside, straight up from the plaza, or from the gallery bar across the square directly opposite the portals. The town describes a kind of semicircle around the church, arranged by nature something like the balconies of an opera house, where from every position one has a view of the center of the stage. With its lyrical twin towers, its richly ornate facade, and its heavily gilded altars, the church is an excellent example of Mexican Churrigueresque. But the outside is far more pleasing than the inside, where in a frenzy to pour out gratitude, Borda's decorators lost their sense of proportion and taste.

You are told that the mortar that holds the bricks together was mixed with Spanish wine instead of water, and that the bricks themselves were tempered with powdered silver. The legend is most likely false, but there is a mellowness of old wine in the atmosphere of Taxco, and from a distance a haze sometimes lies upon the town like a protective tissue of silver gauze.

Remarking the graceful house, the trails of orchids, the waves of magenta bougainvillea, it is hard to realize that Taxco was and still is a mining town. Yet you have to look into the side of the hill under the Hotel Borda across the ravine to see the activity of mining. All night the work goes on, the hillside in shaded illumination, the sound of cables winding slowly. Silver was discovered in the Taxco district over four hundred years ago—in 1522, the year after the conquest. From here, the first silver mined under the conquistadors was sent back to Spain.

Much of the precious metal that is extracted from the local earth is locally processed and turned into beautiful silver handcraft work in many shops a football's throw from the plaza. The final product is the nearest rival on this continent to the modern silverware of the Danish George Jensen and the exquisite creations of the Swedish Baron Fleming. At the many of the town's showrooms one buys not only objects made by native silversmiths with .980 fine silver from the Taxco mines, but woodwork with woods from the hot country, serapes of pure wool spun and woven in the shop, and tin hammered in the best Mexican tradition and finish.

The four of us, Jim, Andrée, Max and I, sat on the gallery of the bar overhanging the twilight plaza and relaxed from the whirling drive. Andrée does not drink anything alcoholic, so she and Max sipped orangeades while Jim and I had a couple of tequilas, taken straight with the lime-and-salt formula. I like tequila—it is a downright, clean drink, to the point, like Danish schnapps. We watched the easeful loafing in the square. Swarthy men in white pajama suits and wide sombreros, and women with their dregs-of-wine-colored rebozos wrapped about their heads, idled on the benches or leaned against the laurel trees. The band was not playing, there was no wail of a jukebox, no blatant talk-talk of radio. In their infinite wisdom the authorities of Taxco do not permit radios to be owned except by special dispensation. So the noise about the plaza was only a soft blur of conversation, the murmuring of pigeons on the flagstones, a guitar plucked on a balcony, the muted grind of machinery at the mine, the tinkling of donkey feet

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Oil

By J. A. Monrey

Cayetano's Illness

By Dane Chandos

CAYETANO told me one evening that Venustiano was ill. I went round to see him and found him in bed in the alcove of the one room of his adobe house. It was late, and the only lights were a smoking kerosene lamp and a candle stuck in a bottle and a tiny flame burning before a big picture of Our Lady of Zapopan. His nieces were sitting chattering on the veranda, and his wife, a good but invincibly stupid woman, was hovering about doing nothing.

I took his temperature. It was a hundred and two. The wrinkled skin of his forehead felt like hot paper. His breathing came chokingly. He was drowsy and dropped off to a half sleep every few minutes, but as soon as he woke, you could see how he resented his helplessness. He was taking, as usual, tisanes prepared by his wife.

"He won't even have an aspirin," said one of the nieces.

Living in an isolated village with no resident doctor, I am used to injecting myself, and I urged Venustiano to let me give him some penicillin. But he wouldn't hear of it.

The next day he was worse. His fever had gone down a little in the morning, but by the afternoon it was soaring higher than ever, and the mucus was bubbling in his chest.

"Yes, he is worse," said his wife, "but this morning I managed to persuade him to make a little vow to the Virgin, nothing difficult, though, as you know, he doesn't give importance to those things. So, though he is worse, he will be better."

Venustiano had been asleep when I arrived. But he then opened his eyes amid their mesh of wrinkles. He was not at all delirious.

"Look, Venustiano," I said. "Your wife tells me you've taken a vow—you! Now if you've done that, which you know you don't believe in, to please

her, why won't you take some penicillin, which you don't believe in either, to please me? Surely that is what a reasonable man would do."

Venustiano looked at me with the expression of a grown-up allowing a couple of kids to trick him.

"What a man has to suffer when he's sick," he said. "Every three hours, you say? And how do I wake up that often?"

"I'll see to that."

I gave him his injection and went home to supper. I told the Fountanneys about Venustiano.

"You're going to sit up all night injecting him?" said the Professor.

"Well, they haven't a clock, and his wife's not capable of injecting him, even, if they had."

Mrs. Fountanney glanced at me under the brows that made her look so supercilious.

"You'll be a wreck. I shall come at two o'clock and relieve you. Don't be silly, Logan. I can sleep all day tomorrow if I want to. And I know where the house is, and I'm not in the least afraid of going there alone at night. No, I mean it. I shall be there."

And she was. Punctually at two o'clock she knocked at the door. She had a thermos and her embroidery and a little battery lamp shaped like a lantern, which gave a smooth white light. The nieces and Venustiano were asleep, but his wife set up a great whispered to-do about the señora. Mrs. Fountanney established herself at once where she could see Venustiano and enjoy the light without its disturbing him.

"You can be quite at ease," she told me, "so go home and get some sleep. After the eight-o'clock dose I shall return for breakfast."

I looked back at her as I went of the door. She had already put on her big glasses and was straightening her canvas. Everything about her was as different

from everything about Venustiano's wife as it could be, and the few things she had brought were conspicuous among Venustiano's possessions. Yet she did not look in the least out of place, any more than Venustiano looked out of place in my armchair when he came to call. I realized that she had exactly the same calm dignity as Venustiano himself and that neither of them would ever take on the color of their surroundings or be out of place anywhere in the world.

Just as I was preparing to go round to Venustiano's the next morning, Nieves came to say that Señora de los Bohorques would like to speak to me.

I found the old lady pacing up and down her room, obviously very agitated. I had half expected she wanted to complain about the noise of a party that some of my guests had held the night before, but she at once told me that she must leave the next day and that she hoped I would not interpret this abrupt departure as dissatisfaction within anything in my so agreeable house.

"I have had a letter from my niece, señor, my favorite niece, who was orphaned and whom I brought up. Unfortunately she made a marriage which turned out unhappy, and for many years she has been separated from her husband. And now she writes to say that she has fallen in love and wants a divorce in order to marry again."

She stopped and paced again, running her beautiful hand over her brow.

"You know, of course, señor, that our church does not recognize divorce. But that would be the least, since for the church a civil divorce simply does not exist. But to marry again! So you see, it is imperative that I should go to advise her what is right."

I gave way to my curiosity and asked what she would advise.

"Señor, she has been unhappy. She has not had anything of her life. She is not a girl, and perhaps she has found something of true happiness. One is not inhuman. And if it is indeed so, then she must take such an outrage as marrying after a divorce I can him as a lover, for so long as she does not commit continue to receive her. And I shall go on foot next week with the pilgrimage to Talpa in order that Our Lady may guide my niece allright."

A FEW nights later we had the biggest storm of the season. It sounded as if several storms were meeting, and at times the lightning was almost continuous. The claps shook the house, and one was so tremendous that the dogs shot under the bed and the badger woke up. Usually the animals take no notice of lightning but are frightened of rockets. In the morning, quite early, Candelaria, Nieves, Cayetano, Aurora, Lola, and Obdulia all came crowding into my room.

"Lupe, she of the fierce duck—" they said in unison, and then stopped.

"Well, what about her?"

"The lightnings—" said Nieves.

"That very big thunder, it must have been—" said Obdulia.

"And she so afraid—" said Aurora.

"The pillar—" said Candelaria but was for once talked down.

"Merced was drunken when he built it—" said Cayetano.

"And they say that her sister Bernardina, she of the little shop, who squints, will inherit all," put in Aurora.

"D'you mean she's dead?" I asked.

"Dead, dead," said Candelaria, talking at a great rate and quelling interruption with a defiant circular glance, "the house was struck, and the pillar crumbled, and everyone came running, but it was hard to get through the rubble, and when they did—it took two hours—they found the pillar had fallen on that beautiful bed of metal with the pink gauze curtains, and on Lupe, and there she was, crashed as if on a grindstone though the duck was not hurt."

I said we must hope at any rate that she was killed outright and did not suffer.

"Yes," said Aurora, "she was dead when we found her, for the soul was already leaving the body. Tiburcia, who lives near by, went and brought a little piece of mirror—a piece of that big one that broke itself here not long ago and Tiburcia took the piece out of the rubbish heap for I saw her—and we held it to Lupe's mouth, and it clouded, so we knew that was the soul departing."

Self-Pity

By Sjanna Solum

D OOR to door
From day to day
Her pack she bore
In a dreary way
And peddled her woes
Self-righteously.
A trinket too private
For public stare:
She would contrive it
Expensive ware,
Displaying what
Had best be hid.

We all were caught;
We could not rid
Ourselves; we could
Not close the door
Upon what stood
Unshamed before
Us, adamant:
The whined-for fee
Exorbitant
In sympathy!

Game Fishing

In Mexico

By Jim Brewer

IN the picture-blue waters of the Pacific off the western coast of Mexico, from Guaymas to Acapulco, there is some of the most abundant and adventuresome game-fishing in the world. From January to May, when the wily blue marlin and sailfish are on the move, Mexico's picturesque coastal waters are transformed into a fisherman's paradise. For the sportsman who makes the trip southward, the rewards are rich. Nature has provided a pageant of beauty and a theatre of thrills to gladden the heart of any man.

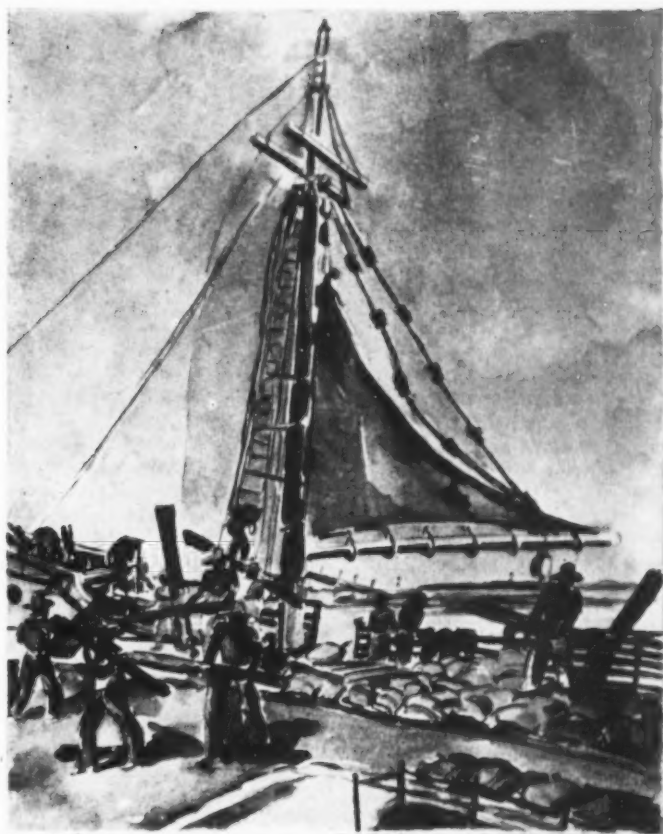
I have fished in Mexico's waters for the past few years and I find I am inexorably committed to fishing there for many years more. I have experienced many moments of profound pleasure. Besides there is the fact that fishing in Mexico has improved my health.

Acapulco in the southwest and Tampico on the Gulf have achieved greater renown as fishing centers, yet Mazatlan is my own favored spot. Acapulco, of course, has its famed sailfish Rodeo each year, an event which attracts some of the best deep-sea anglers from both Mexico and the United States. Tampico is the scene of the annual Tarpon Rodeo in the waters of the Panuco River, and both of these events have become legendary in the language of the fishing sportsmen of several countries.

Mazatlan is a seaport town 730 miles south of the border, directly opposite the tip of Lower California. From the beautiful Belmar Hotel, there is a breathtaking view of the blue Pacific; of numerous small islands dotted like pinpoints of magic on a serene, sunny day; of the tireless white-capped breakers as they come sweeping into shore; of the bustle in the harbor busy with small boats. Providing a stately backdrop for Mazatlan are the surrounding mountains, rich with silver, copper and gold deposits. Although no main highway runs into Mazatlan, it is a thriving city, and is just isolated enough to have a beauty and culture characteristically its own.

* * *

The sportsman reaches Mazatlan by rail, after a journey which will provide him with a lifetime of imagery. There is something particularly exciting about traveling through Mexico, seeing the warmhearted, simple people who possess a wisdom and contentment—and dignity. At the end of a day and a half, at Mazatlan, there are the thrills of the angler waiting.



Water Color.

By Ruth Van Sickle Ford.

The blue marlin are on the move in January, moving north to take up new habitat. They are most abundant during the first two months of the year, and sometimes active through March and April. The Pacific sailfish come by in April and reach the peak of their activity in May, for the first five months of the year, then, there is plenty for the angler, in that most exciting aspect of deep-sea fishing—bringing in the swordfish!

Every one of the needle-nosed beauties is an individual challenge. You sight his tail or fin knifing through the cool, blue water; at once you know this is what you are after. You are tense when you move toward him and bring your bait close in to about forty feet, waiting for him to make his dive. You can watch him now, alert when he dives in and strikes the bait. Your thrill is greatest when you feel that strike and drop the wounded bait back, so that your foe can pick it up. There is that moment of suspense, an indescribable, infinite moment, when you are waiting for the pick up to set the hook; and then the fight is really on. There is that gradual tightening of the line; the close cooperation between you and the boat's captain, as the "Great Fighter" takes monstrous leaps across the water, and dances madly on its trail in an effort to break the line, or the grip of the slender hook. And there is never a moment to grow careless if the fish is to be brought home.

A good-sized sailfish will measure nine feet and weigh around a hundred pounds. But there have been unusual catches of these cagey sea-battlers that measured over eleven feet and weighed over two hundred pounds. These are indeed big game fish.

Although swordfish reach their peak in the early part of the year, the fisherman has a wide variety throughout the year. Schools of smaller fish are plentiful in Mexican waters—sport for the amateur angler's hook; the professional fisherman's net; and the jaws of their hostile neighbors. The Sierra (Spanish

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Patterns of an Old City

A FAREWELL REUNION

By Howard S. Phillips

EACH of them knew the old house well—knew it in all minute detail, as intimately as their own respective pasts wherewith in sundry ways it was closely bound; each had for years regarded this house as a second home, as a refuge, as a source of new strength and hope, even at times as a primary home; and as they gathered here now bound by a common concern each felt more acutely than ever the hiatus of remoteness, of strangeness, of indifference or antipathy which kept them apart—an innate begrudging of their inadvertent kinship, a hidden resentment of the image of their own frustrations each reflected in the other's eyes—, begrudging even the bond of their common concern, because in the hearts of all there was the feeling of impending loss and desolation, the somber shadow of an approaching death.

After years of separation, of mutual avoidance, they were brought together by Tía Luchita in this farewell reunion, in this grim and strenuous act of final enforced sociability: they were summoned to this old house, and each responded guided either by veritable sentiment or coldblooded practical reasons, for each, in one way or another had a standing debt with the old lady—a debt that grew larger through the years of her life, an unrepayable debt, which would be further enhanced by whatever she willed in her final largesse.

It was now a question of hours, of another day or two at most, a dismal period when doctors and nurses diligently continue their hopeless task, a period of futile injections and serums, of blood transfusions and oxygen bags—the futile frantic period of prolonging an ebbing life by a few more hours.

And as they sat waiting for this final moment, striving to conceal their indifference or hostility in carrying on a whispered conversation, striving within the gravity of the situation to seem amenable, beyond their mutual begrudging, involuntarily, jealously, they shared a common sense of imminent bereavement; for each in his or her own way beheld in the passing of Tía Luchita an irreparable personal loss, and each, beyond their common sentiment, concealed the question—how much? How much, if anything, will there be left to me?

Their feeling, as they waited, was that of grief, of anxiety and boredom—a feeling which accentuated their normal state, for each of them for different reasons and in different ways was bored, restless and dissatisfied with life and what they have made of it. Each, beyond the consoling question of how much?, sensed keenly the approaching loss, for throughout a long time they grew accustomed to depend on Tía Luchita in moments of hardship or trial, and it was indeed her material aid, shrewd advice or timely intervention that helped to keep them all out of any serious trouble. One cannot live forever, they reasoned to themselves, and eighty-two is long enough for anyone. This had to come some day. And yet, she had been with them so long, and she had been so unfailingly helpful, so completely dependable in moments of need, that somehow they came to regard her as a kind of permanent indestructible institution. Each dolefully realized that the world would not be the same without Tía Luchita.

They were all limbs of the same ancient tree, of the same sturdy trunk whose roots reached deep into the native soil. But they were all fragile limbs, the furthestmost withering branches of a tree that through many ill-chosen graftings had lost its original sinew and semblance, of a tree that in fact no longer actually existed, no longer existed even as a state of mind.

For not one of them was a direct offspring and not all of them were kinsmen in blood. They were a crowd of near or far relatives or fortuitous hangers-on whom Tía Luchita in the course of years had gathered around her as the means of creating a valid place for herself, as an outlet for magnanimity, and as an agreeable pastime. A benevolent matriarch, zealously watchful even of the remotest member of her divided clan, Tía Luchita had been childless in her own marriage. And it was this initial frustration which probably explained her staunch devotion to the offspring of her own and her husband's sisters and brothers, and even to more distant kin or rank outsiders—the miscellaneous crowd of latent mourners now gathered in her house in melancholy anticipation, hiding their tension and their mutual antipathies in petty guile, in veiled small talk and affected affability.

* * *

This mutual lack of friendliness defined in itself a betrayal of Tía Luchita's impartial and friendly attitude toward them all—an attitude of open mind and heart which stemmed from an assurance that the mere fact of her being very rich while most of them were poor did not in any way represent superiority, that at best she had probably been a little more cautious, a little more alert and lucky than they were. And this was actually true.

And it was probably also true that she acquired compassion and understanding for others because in her own lifetime she had savoured her share of bitter adversity; had known opulence and ease as well as poverty and abandon. She had been born rich, and she married a man of wealth. They belonged to the master class, the privileged and envied set, and the tranquil world they lived in seemed impregnable. And then suddenly this world came to an end.

During the years of the holocaust, while their land-holdings were taken away from them one by one and delivered to their peones, she and her husband lived in France, and then, driven out by the war, moved to Spain. Havoc seemed to be overrunning the entire world. They were homesick and bored and extremely poor, precariously existing on the sale of her jewelry or the uncertain remittances from home. They returned to France after the war was over, and managed to make ends meet on her husband's modest earnings as sightseeing guide for South American tourists. They had never outlived their homesickness, and when at the end of several years her husband died after a brief and apparently innocuous illness, unable to endure her solitude, she returned to Mexico.

She had been away twelve years, and now she was a stranger in her native land. She was not only a stranger; she had to begin her life all over again. She had to gather and tie the broken threads, to find

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Indian Interlude In Mexican Architecture

By Trent Elwood Sanford

IN THE years following the Spanish conquest, the Church remained dominant, and as the work of converting the Indians progressed, with decidedly doubtful completeness, the new religion of the land included some interesting interpretations, half Christian, half Indian, helped along by both pageantry and professed miracles.

It is doubtful whether any of the more somber denominations of the Christian religion, such as the growing Protestant groups in Europe, could have achieved the success that the colorful medieval Roman Catholic Church, with its increasingly elaborate ritual, did with the Indians. The colored robes of the priests, the processions with music and banners and the swinging of censers, the richly decorated altars, and the pictures and images all were readily accepted. On the surface it mattered little to the Indians that their gods and idols were replaced by Christ and the Virgin Mary and the various saints (at least they were willing to make room for the newcomers alongside their old favorites, which to all outward appearances they had cast aside, but continued to worship in secret) as long as the pageantry and apparent idolatry were there.

Conversion of the natives was further facilitated because of the similarity in various beliefs and habits, described by the early friars as stolen from the evangelic law by the devil and introduced among the Indians, who had been receiving in falsehood what, after conversion, they received in truth. These included baptism, communion, and confession. Native rituals had included the use of incense and of sacred ointments, fasting, and penitence. Bells were used during certain ceremonies, and on certain occasions ashes were rubbed onto a part of the body. The supreme deity of the Indians was believed to have breathed and divided the waters of the heavens and the earth, and in a similar manner to have begotten Quetzalcoatl. Feasts in honor of the war god Huitzilopochtli and of the rain god Tlaloc were preceded by forty days of fasting, an Aztec Lent.

With similarity of beliefs and habits as a beginning, and in addition pomp and ceremony, color and music, all of which appealed to the Indian, conversion appeared to make rapid strides. The Indian religion had been a species of polytheism and, to the Indian,



Drawing

By José A. Rodríguez.

Christianity, too, was and has remained polytheistic. The Catholic saints were merely added to their list of divinities. The image of Santiago, for example, had led the Spaniards to victory in battle. The Indians, therefore, recognizing Santiago's superiority to their corresponding deity, felt that he was well worth accepting, and adopted and worshipped him as another god of war.

But the Spaniards apparently had no saint of rain. Even the Saviour was not so identified. The story of the Crucifixion and the figure of a bleeding Christ stirred the sympathies and appealed to the imagination of the Indians, but there was nothing in the story of Christ that gave evidence of ability to make it rain and thus make the crops to grow; so although they accepted Him with willingness, they saw no reason for dispensing with Tlaloc.

The Indians were, however, often willing to give the Christian figures of adoration a chance. It is related that at one village a heavy picture of Jesus was taken from the church and carried for miles through the fields, which in spite of these efforts, remained parched. The next day the same experiment was made with a picture of the Virgin Mary, and a heavy rainfall interrupted the march. The Virgin was tenderly returned to the church, a feast was given in her honor, and offerings were bestowed upon her. But from then on, in that village, Jesus was "no good."

Yet in most places Christ was accepted and became an Indian deity, and, in some instances, was thoroughly Indianized. In many churches throughout Mexico there is a black Christ. Sometimes they are coffee-colored, sometimes a lighter brown. Each has its own story. In one instance the legend is that the devil had taunted the Indians with the fact that their image of Christ was white and not like them; at which some of them began to revert to their pagan practices. At the next mass their Christ was seen by the faithful to have turned dark during the service.

Colorful processions always appealed to the Indians and whetted their imagination to carry these further with elaborately costumed ceremonial dances, as they had always done, but adding, now, pageants from the history of the religion of the Spaniards; so that, in addition to such ceremonies as the native "tiger dances," they performed in the atria of the churches

dramatic spectacles to illustrate events of the Christian calendar. At Christmas time the birth of Christ was dramatically carried out in all of the crudest details, and the Crucifixion on Good Friday left nothing unacted. An especially popular ceremony was, and still is, the dance depicting the wars between the Moors and the Christians. In this favorite mystery play chronology and nationality are of little concern. Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon Bonaparte can be found fighting side by side with Santiago, Cortés, and a band of angels, to drive the Moors out of Spain.

* * *

In addition to such ceremonies held rather universally there are local fiestas, many of them based on a miracle which had given rise to the building of a certain church venerated as a shrine. Most famous and most sacred of such shrines is that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, an "Indian" virgin, the story of which, though oft-repeated, is worth retelling here, since it plays such an important part in the early religious history of Mexico, and its subsequent architecture.

One day in the winter of 1531, so the story goes, a humble native, Juan Diego by name, was walking over the barren hill of Tepeyac on his way to mass, when suddenly the Virgin appeared before him and bade him go to the bishop and tell him that she wished a church built on that spot in her honor. The humble Indian hurried to the bishop, Juan Zumárraga, but could not gain an audience. The next day at the same spot the Virgin again appeared and repeated her command, saying that it was the Virgin Mary, mother of God, who was sending him.

Juan retruned to the bishop, who this time listened to his story but demanded that he come back again with proof. A third time the Virgin appeared before the Indian and, hearing of the bishop's doubts, commanded Diego to climb the rocky hill and pick the roses which he would find growing there. Though knowing that the hill had always been barren, he obeyed, and to his amazement found the place covered with the beautiful flowers. Plucking them, he brought them to the Virgin, who filled his mantle, or "tilma," and bade him return to the bishop with his proof. Hurrying again to the bishop, Juan unfolded his "tilma." Lo and behold! Instead of roses falling out, on his "tilma" there appeared a beautifully painted image of the Virgin.

A chapel was built on the spot, which is just a few miles north of Mexico City, and to accommodate the great throngs who every year make the pilgrimage there, a much larger church was later built. Above its high altar the gentle-faced Indian Virgin looks down today on the multitude of worshippers. The story was officially recognized by the Pope, and the Virgin of Guadalupe became the patron saint of Mexico.

On the same site, before the Conquest, had stood a sanctuary of Tonantzin, mother of the gods and the Indian Goddess of the Earth and of Corn. Strangely enough, though there are churches all over Mexico dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe, pilgrims still come from many miles around by the thousands to that hillside shrine (in the suburb formerly known as Guadalupe-Hidalgo, but now called Villa Madero); and to this day, if an Indian is asked who Tonantzin is, the answer will be: "Es la Virgen."

On the outskirts of the city to the west, just beyond Naucálpán, is another shrine, that of Los Remedios, dedicated to an image of the Virgin said to have been brought over by one of the followers of Cortés. According to tradition, this wooden figure was taken, a few days before the disastrous retreat of "La Noche Triste," to the hill where the shrine now stands

and hidden beneath a giant maguey for safe keeping. Twenty years later it was found by a former Indian chieftain, who took it to his hut, where he made an altar for it that he might worship it in secret. During the night it disappeared, and the next morning was found again under the maguey on the hill. Taking it back to his hut, the Indian this time placed it in a chest and slept on the lid. At second time it vanished, and again it was found beneath the maguey.

Reporting these strange events to the priest at Tacuba, the Indian was told that a miracle had been performed, a shrine was built on the hill where the Virgin had been found, and the wooden doll was dressed in satins and pearls. So great was her power of attraction and so marvelous her ability to ward off epidemics and to make it rain that a larger shrine was soon needed to hold the multitude of Indians and Spaniards alike who came to worship at her feet. When a drought or an epidemic threatened, the "Virgen de los Remedios" was carried in holy procession through the streets of the city, and only a noble of the highest rank was permitted to drive the chariot in which the image reposed. Each of the monasteries was visited in succession, and the friars and the nuns fell on their knees in humble adoration. At the cathedral she was solemnly received by the viceroy, the city council, the archbishop, and the rest of the clergy, high mass was sung, and lavish gifts were thrust upon her to be taken back to the shrine on the hill.

At the time of the War for Independence this Virgin was chosen by the Spaniards as their protectress, in opposition to the Virgin of Guadalupe, who was leading the Mexican troops to victory, and she was solemnly made a General of the Royal Army. So great was the rivalry that many uncomplimentary epithets were hurled by the opposing forces at the enemy's mascot, and many were the insinuations that were cast relative to the virtue of the opposing Virgins. When, in one battle, the "Virgen de los Remedios" was captured, she was stripped of her uniform by a Mexican general, her passport was signed, and she was ordered deported to Spain. She was permitted to remain only on the promise that she would be taken out of politics!

She stands in her shrine today, among maguey plants and Indian shacks, on a lonely hill overlooking a great valley crossed by a long stone aqueduct and guarded by conical towers.

There are many other shrines dedicated to Our Lady of the Remedies, one of the most famous of which is that atop the great pyramid at Cholula. Built in the centre of a large paved area surrounded by a stone balustrade is the Baroque church which houses a small crowned image of "Nuestra Señora de los Remedios." Thousands of pilgrims climb the ancient pyramid each year to leave votive offerings at the altar. The church, with its glittering, tile-covered dome, has been radically restored, both without and within, and its architectural value is of secondary interest to its site and to the spectacular view out over the plain, dotted here and there with churches and framed by the snow-covered mountains beyond.

* * *

Another shrine, almost equally famous, is that of the "Sacro Monte" at Amecameca (Aztec for "Many Water Holes"). The highway leading there is a beautiful drive, as it makes a beeline for snow-covered Popocatepetl, until one comes abruptly into Amecameca, lying below that great peak and even closer below its great sister peak, Ixtaccihuatl. The vast and barren plaza, the arched gateways, and the churches of

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Death, Fiestas And Music

By Herbert Cerwin

MEXICAN MUSIC, dances and fiestas are all three indigenous to Mexico. The same music, the same dances and most of the fiestas that are today a part of the Mexican scene were going on when the Spaniards arrived. While the Conquest resulted in certain innovations, the changes were not radical. There are still many mountain villages where the *chirimia* and the drum are played and where the Indians go into a religious, drunken orgy just as they did five hundred or a thousand years ago.

The costumes they now wear are different and so are the saints and the deity they worship. But to them, these saints they dress in silk and lace are nothing more than their idols of old. It is so with the Christian God. They pray to Him but they also pray to the gods of the sun, of the wind, of the rain. Even the dates of the fiestas and the places where they are held coincide with the pagan dates and background.

For the Spanish priests who came with Cortés were wise in their way. They destroyed the stone and clay gods and erected the cross in their place but they did not attempt to crush the religious fervor of the Indians. They just said: Keep on with your fiestas and your dances. Juan, Pedro and José, but remember that man has only one God and to Him you pray and dance. If the third month of the full moon is the fiesta of your village, let it be so in the *futura*. If you gave corn seeds to your rain god, bring them now to the altar. There under the shadow of the crucifix your born shall be blessed and God will see that there shall be rain and that your earth shall be fertile. Dance then, and play music in His name, so that you will have good corn.

The priests also allowed them to dress the saints, to put some of them in wedding lace; they permitted them to carry the saints out of the church in procession and sometimes to bring them to the exact spot where the Indians had worshiped their own gods. Here they had their fiestas and the hills reverberated with their pagan music and chants. The priests called it a religious festival in honor of the patron saint of the village, but it was that in name only.

Such are the fiestas of the remote Indian villages in the mountains and in the valleys. The fiestas of



Etching.

By Magdalena Case Madrid.

the towns and cities have had a greater transformation and the change that has come through the Conquest and the years is more apparent. But all Mexican fiestas, whether they are held on December 12 at the Basilica de Guadalupe or on July 16 in Oaxaca, are of the same mixture: religious fervor, and a valiant effort to have fun.

And, because Mexicans, whether they are white mestizos or Indians, have a certain flair for the dramatic and the tragic, the fiestas are never better than when background is death. I am certain that no fiesta reaches the height of a good funeral and the wake preceding it.

Death is very close to the hearts of the Mexicans. Over the centuries they have evolved a rather good philosophy about death and when it comes they meet it much more realistically than we do. The Church helps them to overcome their grief. For a few days they are the center of much attention; friends that they have not seen in years return once more. They enjoy this sympathy bestowed on them, this attention that gives them a certain importance in the eyes of all. On the evening of the wake, the men gather in one room to drink and tell stories; the women in another room to weep and gossip. The grieved one has no time to grieve for she is busy either supervising or helping to prepare the midnight supper.

The Indians are known to accept death even more willingly than the mestizos. To Indians, death is the great climax, the dramatic finish to the earthly role they have been playing. Death seems to offer them the happiness and peace they have long sought and never attained. The Church and the priest have promised it to them. Besides, they say, how can death be worse than life itself? For death is like sleeping and when one sleeps one forgets.

An Indian family who have had a death leave nothing undone in helping to make the journey easier. Even as the last breath of the dying one is drawn, plans are already being made as to what food must be bought and prepared for the mourners, the neighbors, the friends who will come to the wake. There must be tequila and pulque and there must be music. All night they sit up in the crowded hut keeping company

with the dead one stretched out in the pine coffin; his final hours on earth shall not be lonely. Sometimes they will chant an elegy to the saints, more often they will just get drunk and sing that tragic music of theirs while the musicians play the *chirimía* and the drum. And when these instruments are not available, there is always the guitar on which they can play so beautifully, so sadly. For most Mexican music is tragic.

It is not unusual for happier music to be played if the death is that of an Indian child. There must be no sadness; the mother must hold back her tears and her grief, for it is God who has greater need of her child and He will make an angel of him. So the little body is dressed in white silk and wings are attached to the shoulders. The tiny coffin is painted with scrolls and flowers. Stars cut out of gold and silver paper are hung on threads from the ceiling, and they glitter in the night with the light of the candles. When the neighbors, relatives and friends arrive, they do not come to join the mother in her grief. Instead they congratulate her that her child will not know the earthly sufferings that have been theirs.

It is good that such deaths are accepted philosophically. For in these villages death comes often to the newborn and the young. The town carpenter cuts out and nails together twenty of these little pine coffins to one for a grownup. Sometime when you are walking through one of these towns, look into a carpenter shop; you'll see the baby coffins stacked up high, but there are never enough. They sell fast in Mexico.

Of such things you do not often read or hear. These fiestas of the living and the dead are not mentioned in the guidebooks.

Quite different kinds of celebration are those dances in which the gay life of the early Spaniards in Mexico is revived. These include the *Jarabe* or hat dance of Jalisco, the *Huapango* of Vera Cruz, the *Sandunga* of Tehuantepec and the *Jarana* of Yucatán. They are dances introduced by the Spaniards, kept up by the gente decente and occasionally performed by natives for special celebrations.

In Mexico City there is a group of men known as *Los Charros*. They are politicians, businessmen, doctors, lawyers and bankers. Every Sunday they don their charro suits, long narrow trousers and short jackets, often embroidered and usually trimmed in silver. They also wear big gold or silver embroidered sombreros and always a pistol or two. Then they go for a ride on their fine horses through the park. They look colorful and spectacular, but they are not charros come from Jalisco and they are not cowhands who punch cattle and do ranch work on the haciendas. Now they wear blue jeans and leather chaps. The only ones who dress like charros are those Mexico City Sunday riders and professional mariachi musicians.

Most of the Mexican fiestas are the products of boredom, among the gente *bién* and the mestizos as well as among the Indians. The difference is that the gente *bién* and the mestizos have many ways in which they find relief from their boredom while the Indians have to rely on their own created fiestas. As a result, the native fiestas, unlike the hat dance of Jalisco and the *Huapango* de Vera Cruz, have a certain genuine quality and sincerity. They are not put on to entertain anyone but themselves and the spectators are as much a part of it as the members of the cast.

There is a fiesta at Huejotzingo on the road to Puebla which takes place in May of every year. It has a rather complicated legend though briefly it is the battle between the French and the Mexicans. The Indians dress like bearded French Napoleonic soldiers, some of them with blond wigs, and try to act out their conception of a Frenchman. The costumes are old,

moth-eaten and dirty; few of them fit. Dressed in them, the Indians lose their dignity and become cloth puppets out of a comic ballet. Yet, with that inferiority that the white men have forced on them I am sure they enjoy being Frenchmen. For a few hours, for a day, they are no longer Indians but white men. The uniform, the beard and the wig have wiped away their humbleness and they strut around the plaza and the streets posing and shouting, trying to be what they are not and looking quite ridiculous.

After hours of waiting the fiesta begins. It is a monotonous affair, much like an unrehearsed grammar-school play. No one really knows his role or what's expected of him. The actors yell at each other and they brandish their wooden swords. The tequila bottle is passed around. Some of the Indians get drunk, one or two fall off their horses. Eventually the principal part of the fiesta is over; there will be skyrockets and other fireworks in the evening. The drinking, however, goes on continuously. And late at night near the doorway of a building one often comes across a rather startling sight: a slovenly dressed French soldier of the nineteenth century, stretched out drunk, his cotton-gloved hand gripping a wooden sword.

It is said that not a day passes in Mexico without a fiesta somewhere. Most of them now have degenerated into smalltown carnivals of the Ferris wheel, bingo and merry-go-round variety. Generally Mexican fiestas have become threadbare, colorless and disappointing, certainly not worth going miles to see. There are some, however, which still retain the pagantry, the atmosphere and the solemnity of the past. These are usually the ones which have remained closest to the pagan rituals honoring the gods, and ironically many of them are performed in front of or even inside the very churches which have never fully succeeded in supplanting this pagan worship. They usually take place in mountain villages far from roads and difficult to reach.

Some of the best of these ceremonial rites take place in the northern mountains of Nayarit; in the valley and hills of Oaxaca; in the state of Guerrero; and throughout the southern highlands of Chiapas. In Nayarit, cattle and sheep are sacrificed for the gods and the Indians dance around the animals until they drop to the ground from exhaustion. The Indians of Guerrero have some rituals so pagan in form and so closely guarded that few white men have had the opportunity to witness them. In Oaxaca they still do the feather dance of the serpent but it has lost most of its significance though it has kept its pagantry. The Lacandonas, the Chamulas and the Zinacantans of Chiapas have weird, secret rites with all the mysteries of the jungle. One of the most impressive is that of the Chamulas when the tribes change major-domos on the first of each year. This transfer of authority takes place amidst the burning of incense, the sending off of skyrockets and the religious chanting in the native dialect that goes on for hours. During such rites the priests usually keep away from the churches.

Other fiestas or ceremonies, religious in character, are held in the larger cities and towns and are usually stimulated and controlled by the Church. The most important of these demonstrations is the December 12 celebration in Mexico City in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of the Mexicans. Indians from all sections gather at the Basilica de Guadalupe and before the sun rises they begin their native dances and chants while the faithful crawl on their knees for long distances until they reach the altar and the image of the Virgin.

Perhaps even more spectacular is the annual pil-

grimage to Chalma, where the church has the rugged Mexican mountains for a backdrop and a valley with a river for a courtyard. It can be reached only by foot or horseback but this does not prevent the aged, crippled and maimed from making the trip. Once there they drop on their knees before El Señor de Chalma, whose miraculous healing powers are comparable only to that of the Black Christ at Esquipulas in Guatemala. Indians from the north, south, east and west of Mexico travel by foot for weeks to visit the Chalma shrine on this day. But Indians are not the only ones to go. It draws some of the gente bien, whose sins must be mighty ones to make them accept the hardships of the trip, the smell of thousands who know no other plumbing than the side of a tree or the back of a bush.

* * *

There are many fiestas the significance of which is forgotten. One of them is the fiesta of the radishes held in Oaxaca the twenty-third of December. Weeks before, the Indians plant the radish seeds next to their corn. They water them daily, they fertilize the ground, they cultivate the young plants with care. They try to grow them big and grotesque, the more weird in shape and size the better.

On the morning of December 23 they select the best specimens and then dress them, paint in eyes, noses and mouths, give them arms and legs. In the evening when the sun goes down they hang these dressed radishes on strands in the plaza to sell.

Are these Indians just children after all? Or do they think themselves gods trying to create people out of radishes? Or is it a pagan tradition, staged to demonstrate that they are able and qualified to work the soil? Or are radishes a sign of fertility? Or perhaps is it the Indians' naive way of caricaturing humanity by making radishes look like people?

And even as they put on sale these radishes dressed as people, what are other Indians and mestizos doing on this fiesta evening in Oaxaca? They are eating buñuelos and dipping these waferlike cakes into the honey on the plates they are served in. When they have finished eating them, what do they do? Return the dishes? No, not on this evening. They crash them on the street, they break them into a hundred pieces until by midnight the street has become a carpet of broken plates.

Why do they do this? If you ask them, they will tell you it is the custom, es la costumbre. If you inquire as to how and why it began, they shake their heads. Quien sabe? Is the answer that they are naturally destructive and enjoy the breakage? Is it that they have a contempt for plates, which are one more symbol of civilization? Or is it just another release, another way to let out their pent-up emotions?

And those who buy the radishes dressed as people and hang them in their homes, why do they do that? What's it all about?

I'd like to know. I'd like to know about the fiestas of the conquistadors that the Indians are often putting on. I should like to find out why they dress as Cortés, as Pedro de Alvarado, as the Spanish King and Queen. Why do they then re-enact the Conquest, these Indians who look so comical, so pathetic in blond wigs, masks and Spanish court dress? Is it their inferiority again? Is it because they want to appear to be white men, to be like the men who invaded and conquered their country. Did the Spaniards teach them to make fools of themselves? Or is the joke really on the Spaniards?

Then there are the voladores of Papantla in the state of Vera Cruz. Once in May each year, a group of Indians of this village dress themselves as giant birds, with wings and tails of feathers. They shimmy up a high pole to which are attached long ropes at the top. They tie the free ends of the ropes on themselves and at a given signal let go, making of themselves a human flying merry-go-round. For a few seconds they do look like birds, as if they were flying in a flock. Then it is all over and they are once more just men dressed as birds. Is it the instinct of man's desire to fly, to imitate the birds, that makes them do this? Were these Indians of this village experimenting in flying centuries before Leonardo da Vinci sketched out a flying craft? Did one of them, long ago, think he could make men fly by putting feathers on them and then sending them swirling into the air?

While the most colorful of these demonstrations are in mountain regions, there are still interesting ones within an hour's drive of Mexico City in the valley of Toluca. Every year in the village of Metepec as the middle of April approaches, the Indian farmers begin to decorate their church. They hang strings of dried corn over the altar; they construct miniature fences of grain and flowers around small figures of saints; in the foreground they make designs of seeds. At home they are busy too, planning and preparing for the day when their animals and their crops will be blessed.

On the morning of this day, a large crowd gathers outside the church. At one end of town a parade has formed and begins to move along the main street. But this is no ordinary parade. It has no floats, no soldiers, no policemen, no bands playing. Instead there are dozens of yokes of oxen in line and hundreds of burros. This is their parade, their day. They have been washed and trimmed and brushed. The coats of the oxen gleam under the warm sun and the silver and gold paper stars pasted on them shine and flicker. The oxen have necklaces, too, made from rolls of bread or chick peas. Sometimes on the wooden whippetree of a pair of oxen is a doll bed with dolls inside, probably as a symbol of fertility. And behind the ox teams, the burros walk along solemnly, their hind legs fitted in pajama trousers.

The horses have not been forgotten. Tablecloths and lace bedspreads have been thrown over them and young girls are riding them, often carrying a pillowcase full of sweet bread to pass to the spectators. Clowns, some wearing beautiful black wood masks with gold-leafed noses and others dressed as turtles, are in the parade. Now the parade reaches the outside of the church. The priest is standing with an assistant. As they pass by he blesses and sprinkles holy water on the oxen, the burros, the horses and the seeds the men bring along. Some of the men carry pulque in gourds conveniently slung over their shoulders for refreshment when the parade pauses. For no Mexican fiesta functions without tequila and pulque. All afternoon and evening the men will drink and many will get drunk, but somehow they will eventually get home. In the morning they will be in the fields again, planting the seeds that have been blessed. They are certain now they will have a good crop.

Even in Mexico City, where there is every type of entertainment available, some of these traditional fiestas are still popular. At Christmas time there are the posadas and the re-enactment of the birth of Christ and groups of people singing and going from house to house, as Joseph and Mary did, seeking food and shelter. At Easter there are the judas, papier-maché

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Uncle Cheto

By Rafael Bernal

I had come up from Mapastepec and the stifling low country to visit Don Ernesto in the highlands.

"Don Ernesto!" everybody had said to me. "There's a man for you! Honest, industrious, kind-hearted! He treats his visitors like kings! Nobody on his place is ever bored, unhappy, or dissatisfied. And more than that," and whenever a native said this sort of thing to me he would drop his voice, on the chance that one of the avaricious German landholders in the neighborhood might be eavesdropping, "he treats the chamulas, the Indian laborers, as if he were their own father. Everybody adores him."

As my mule climbed into the hill country, I seemed to grow stronger and stronger. We rode all morning past the shady coffee plantations, at a cheerful trot and singing gaily. How a man forgets his poverty and his troubles when he sits astride a good mule and rides toward the Chiapas highlands! Blessed Chiapas sierra, dividing the stinking coast country from the blooming cleanness of Comitán and San Cristóbal hills where the men are as strong and hard as stones, where the coffee grows in the shadow, where the

glades are fragrant of lemon-tea bushes and good earth!

From dawn till midday, till we passed the first hills, my chamula companion had not opened his mouth. Now he greeted each new hill with a smile, and at sight of each horizon he gave voice to a shrill cry which served the double purpose of urging on the mules and translating his enormous joy in living.

Finally, from the highest point of the sierra, he pointed down into a valley where we could see among the coffee-groves and gardens, in the shade of mango trees and ahucates, a big house with a number of little houses around it, and flowing by them a clean little river. The guide embraced the little settlement and the immensity of mountains in a vague, generous gesture, and said:

"Liquidambar."

And he smiled broadly, while I contemplated the estate of Don Ernesto, the great man of Chiapas, the brave defender of the chamulas, protector of the poor, hated enemy of the German landgrabbers and their minions.

When I reached the finca I was received by a well

dressed and amiable caporal, who helped me off my mule and led me, chatting cheerfully as we went, to the principal building, where everything was prepared to receive me. I knew nothing of Don Ernesto except what they had told me in the lowlands and all through the coast country about his good deeds. The caporal, also, was loud in his praises, and called my special attention to the fact that the workmen's houses, contrary to the usual arrangement on the great coffee-growing estates, were separate, generous in size, and well-built.

"The chamulas," he said, "are better paid here than anywhere else, and Don Ernesto treats them to a great ball every month. He pays every cent of the cost except for the aguardiente. He will do nothing to encourage drinking because he disapproves of drunkenness and never gives his peons anything to drink. He always pays them entirely in cash."

* * *

There were signs of prosperity on every hand. There were flocks of hens about every house, the little gardens were as neat as rows of pins, the women who came to the doors to look at us were neat and smiling.

"Don Ernesto is so honest," the caporal went on, "that once when he had paid off a chamula laborer who was going back to his village, and discovered after the man had left that he paid him one peso too little, he sent one of his servants post-haste after him to give him his peso."

I had heard this anecdote a hundred times down in the coast country, where not everybody is as honest as this. I learned also that Don Ernesto spent nearly his whole income, which must have been considerable, in improving the living conditions of his chamulas and trying to make them happier. It was very clear why he was known as the father of the chamulas.

When we reached the house we found Don Ernesto waiting to welcome us. He was a man in the neighborhood of sixty, round-faced and cheerful, a big man with a big belly, with a fresh and sonorous laugh. He greeted me as if we had been old friends from childhood, and called at once for red wine.

* * *

When we had eaten, Don Ernesto, who could see that I was tired, postponed showing me about the plantation, and we sat down by the big front door, each with a good cigar, and soon we were chatting delightfully to the accompaniment of the cicadas.

"They told me," said Don Ernesto, "that you worked for three years on the coast and that all you got out of it was swamp fever."

"That isn't far from true," I replied, a little taken aback by so abrupt a question, "but what else can a poor man do?"

"He can get rich," said Don Ernesto seriously.

"That isn't so easy," I objected. "And it takes years—"

"It isn't hard to get rich," he interrupted me, "and you can do it in any of a thousand ways. Some men make a fortune by hard work, others by shrewdness, audacity, or by thinking up something new and original. There are better ways of getting rich than by exploiting the poor and ignorant, without bleeding the chamulas, as most of our landowners. There are ways of making yourself rich and making others happy at the same time. I'm sure that anyone can get rich who chooses to."

"It is easy for you to say that, Don Ernesto," I replied, a little annoyed, "because you are rich al-

ready; but if a man undertook to accumulate a fortune like yours when he must start with nothing, he must toil and toil for years, he must suffer, and unless he happens to have a streak of good luck—"

"You are wrong," he interrupted me again. "Let me tell you about a man I know. The story will be a little long, but we old fellows have nothing but memories to live on, and we like to recall the past, because that gives us a chance to live it over."

I had discovered that my host was very fond of monologuing, and there was nothing to do but listen to him. So I settled myself comfortably in my big chair and emptied my coffee-cup while Don Ernesto told his story:

—If you wish to go from here to San Andrés Chamulas you must cross three sierras, and it will take you three days to cross each of them. San Andrés is a village that is not a village; more than fifty thousand chamulas live in it, and it is made up of a big church with a plaza in front of it flanked by two shops and the house of the counsellor. The other houses are scattered out over an area so large that it would take more than two days to cross it on horseback. That is why I say it is a village which is not a village. It might be better to call it a district with only one counsellor and one church. I must tell you that in these chamula villages the government of the state appoints a magistrate who is called a counsellor, who is generally the only white man in the whole village and who acts as judge, governor, tax collector, and any other official who is needed. There is, to be sure, a sort of mayor or chamula president, who is elected by the people along with a sort of board of aldermen; but this board does nothing but carry requests and information back and forth between the Counsellor and the natives, and they spend their time feasting and drinking at the expense of the president.

* * *

Many years ago the Counsellor of San Andrés was a fellow whose name has nothing to do with the case and whom we will call Uncle Cheto. He was a poor man, and his monthly salary of thirty pesos scarcely paid for his daily bread, not to mention any savings. I have known other Counsellors who helped themselves by cheating the chamulas and by helping the German landgrabbers cheat them; but Uncle Cheto never did anything like that, because it seemed to him that it would have been taking a mean advantage of his position.

One day there was a big fiesta in San Andrés. They had elected a new president, and they were presenting him his rod of authority and formally installing him in his new position. According to an old custom of the chamulas, the new president must foot the bill for a feast and a good drunk for the whole population, with barrels of aguardiente, roasted oxen, and barbecued lamb. More than one president has been ruined by this fiesta, and when this happened it was the habit to elect another president, on the theory that a poor man would be tempted to steal, which would be a bad habit for a president to fall into. Chila Segundo had just been elected president, and he had begun to calculate sadly how much the fiesta would cost him, in view of the fact that more than ten thousand people had put in an appearance and every one of them was determined to get as drunk as a lord before sundown. The ceremonial had reached the point at which the new president beats the retiring official with as many lashes as there had been months in his administration. They do this so that the ex-president will never have any inclination to be president again, which is why nobody in San Andrés Chamulas is ever ambitious for the presidency

and there is much less political wire-pulling than there might otherwise be.

* * *

Chila Segundo whacked at his predecessor with all his might, convinced as he was that he would be whacked just as cruelly when his term ended. The man who was taking the whipping endured the blows stoically, seated on the stone which was set apart for this purpose in front of the church door; and at every lash the multitude uttered a great cry and took a great swallow of aguardiente. When he noticed that the harder he whacked the more brandy his guests disposed of, Chila Segunda finished his task in a hurry and turned to Uncle Cheto to receive the wand of office from his hands. The Counsellor rose from his stone looking very tired and bored, gave Chila his wand, and administered the oath of office, of which, since it was in Spanish, Chila did not understand one word. When the ritual was completed, the mob began to shriek again and empty their bottles. Then they shrieked to have them filled again. By this time everybody was more or less drunk except Uncle Cheto, who refused to drink a drop out of respect for his position and because he believed that the fact that everybody else was drunk was no reason why he should follow their idiotic example.

By this time it was noon. Many of the drunken chamulas were sound asleep and snoring. Others were throwing their arms around one another and trying to sing, and some of them were feebly striking and fighting one another. Uncle Cheto, more and more bored and disgusted as time went on, was brooding over his poverty and calculating how much money Chila must have salted away, in addition to his oxen and mules; and from this calculation he leaped over to still another, namely, to how many gold pieces were probably hidden in the village.

There must be, he told himself, at least ten thousand families; and every head of a family had his earthen pot with at least a handful of coins from the days of the Colony. If we start with the assumption that there are ten thousand pots, and that each pot has about thirty gold coins, and that each coin is worth twenty pesos of our current money—

The gigantic figure made his head swim, and he tried to think about other things. He began to grow angry at the stupidity of these people who were defiling the plaza with their foul drunkenness. They had plenty of money at home. Why did they come out and get drunk on bad aguardiente on this dirty plaza in this mob of disgusting imbeciles? It would be a real favor to them to take their money away from them, or a part of it, and use it in some enterprise which would be useful to the community. Then he had the brilliant idea which was the germ of his good fortune.

Leaving his place so quietly that none of these drunken morons noticed his absence, he entered the church, climbed up into the tower, and cutting the straps that held the bell-clapper in place, he hid it inside his blouse and went home. Arrived there, he hid the clapper carefully and went to bed. That night he dreamed of marvelous iced beverages, brilliant reception halls, and beautiful women.

At dawn he was awakened by cries from the plaza. Uncle Cheto opened his door and discovered that the cries came from Chila, his board of aldermen, and a group of other neighbors. As soon as they saw him in his door, they began to scream even more shrilly:

"Uncle Cheto, Uncle Cheto, somebody has stolen the Holy Bell Clapper!"

Uncle Cheto succeeded in quieting the tumult

and called on Chila Segundo to explain what had happened. The president managed to articulate in the midst of his weeping and wailing:

"Alas, Uncle Cheto, they have carried off the Holy Bell Clapper, which is a thing sacred to Uncle God."

Then all the city fathers raised their voices again in discordant lamentation. But when they grew a little calmer again and Uncle Cheto had meditated the terrible news a little, he drew a very long face and said severely:

"This is a very serious matter for you, because the Holy Bell Clapper is a very sacred thing and it is the tongue with which God calls to you. We can even say that it is the very tongue of God himself. I will tell the señor Governor of the state about it, and we will see what he commands us to do about it."

* * *

So saying, Uncle Cheto went back into his house, followed by the whole ayuntamiento, the whole board, who were still lamenting in subdued voices. He took down the mouthpiece of a prehistoric telephone which had been out of order for more than five years, and pretended to talk to the Governor, while the chamulas waited in hopeful silence. After he had kept up this performance for a while, he turned to the Indians and said to them:

"The señor Governor says that this is a very serious matter and that he really ought to have every one of you hanged for your carelessness."

The ayuntamiento raised such a crying and lamenting that it took Uncle Cheto more than a quarter of an hour to calm them.

When he had them a little quieter, he went on:

"But since the señor Governor loves you all very dearly, he sends word to you that instead of hanging the ayuntamiento, which is what your negligence really deserves, he will permit every man in the village to turn over to me one large gold piece to pay the cost of a search for the Holy Bell Clapper, which will be a very expensive matter."

The ayuntamiento were greatly relieved and delighted at the señor Governor's forgiving generosity; and on the afternoon of the same day men began to come to Uncle Cheto, each with a gold piece wrapped up in a handkerchief. Uncle Cheto rubbed his hands with delight. And along toward midnight, when the men ceased coming and he had counted his coins, he found that he had more than nine thousand of them. He buried his treasure in the patio of his house.

Then a week later he called the ayuntamiento together and announced to them:

"The señor Governor sends me word that he has had his men search carefully everywhere for the Holy Bell Clapper and that they have been unable to find it. He will find it necessary, therefore, to have another bell clapper made."

"That is well," said Chila. "But ask him to have it done at once, since it is a great shame that we must get along for so long a time without our Holy Bell Clapper."

"This new clapper which he will have made," Uncle Cheto went on, "will be of pure gold, since the señor Governor says that if it is of gold you will take better care of it and will not lose it a second time. And since the clapper is to be of gold, it must be blessed by the Holy Father. The señor Governor therefore sends you word that each man in the village must turn over to me three large gold coins."

"But, Uncle Cheto," cried Chila Segunda, "that is terribly expensive!"

"But the Holy Father lives a long distance away

and it will be necessary to send a commission to take the clapper to him. Besides this, you know that every country priest is paid half a real whenever he blesses an object, and the Holy Father must be paid many times as much for this blessing."

This was an unanswerable argument; and by that evening Uncle Cheto had thirty thousand more of the old golden coins, which he buried along with the others in big pouches of leather which he had made for the purpose.

* * *

A month passed. Every day the ayuntamiento came to learn whether there was any news of their golden bell clapper; and every day Uncle Cheto explained to them that the home of the Holy Father was a long distance away. So for a full month the church bells of San Andrés were silent and the people mourning.

At last Uncle Cheto sent for the council and said to them:

"The señor Governor tells me that the bell clapper has arrived in Tuxtla and that I must go and get it."

"No, we will all go!" the chamulas cried in enthusiastic chorus.

"No," said Uncle Cheto hastily. "It would be very unwise for you to go, because the señor Governor is still very angry at you for all the expense and

trouble you have caused by your carelessness. I am certain that if he sees you he will grow angry again and he might order you all hanged on the spot, or at least the president. It is safer for me to go alone, and while I am gone you must prepare a fiesta worthy of so holy a bell-clapper."

The Indians did as they were bidden; and Chila, filled with gratitude to Uncle Cheto, whom he considered his savior, gave him two magnificent mules on which he made the journey to Tuxtla, taking with him the gold he had collected and the stolen clapper.

When he came to the city, he had the money changed in various banks so as not to attract too much attention. He kept back a large number of the coins, and he gave another considerable number of them to a goldsmith whom he knew, who made them into a bell clapper of exactly the dimensions of the old one. Then, carefully avoiding the Governor and the other state officials, he bought some little presents for the members of the ayuntamiento and returned to his district.

In six days he was back in San Andrés, where the chamulas received him with a fabulous fiesta. They deposited the bell clapper in a niche inside the church, where it would be safe from all danger of being stolen. Then they shouted and drank the health of Uncle Cheto till they were all completely hoarse and dead drunk.

This memorable fiesta left Chila Segundo entirely penniless. The villagers therefore elected another president, an event which they celebrated with more fiestas, which lasted for well toward a month. And in

Continued on page 50





WOMAN OF THE PEDREGAL. Oil.

By Jesús Guerrero Galván.

Jesús Guerrero Galván

By Guillermo Rivas

JESUS GUERRERO GALVAN was born in the town of Tonila, Jalisco, some forty-three years ago, and received his initial art training in early boyhood at San Antonio, Texas, and Guadalajara. Though he was still under twenty when he came to Mexico City he soon made a place for himself among the younger group of painters who followed in the footsteps of the mural masters, a place which has steadily gained in prestige during the subsequent years.

Today, Guerrero Galván, still faithful to the aesthetic and social tenets of the mural era, has evolved a style and expression which clearly set him apart from his contemporaries. And yet his work evinces a more thorough "Mexicanism" than that of almost any other painter who may be identified with what has come to be known as the modern Mexican school. This peculiar native quality rests not only on his thematic substance and linear structure, but mainly on his distinctive and highly individual employment of color.

The palette of Guerrero Galván, largely confined to somber ochres, is indigenous Mexican. It is the authentic color of the native skin and earth, and it seems to breathe its very spirit. In juxtaposition to the always prevalent earthen browns he utilizes, only

in details, soft, glowing splashes of primrose, of argentine white, and occasional undertone touches of blue. Such is his chromatic gamut. And yet I do not know of any other painter in our midst who achieves such plastic opulence, such subtle underlying colorfulness, with a palette as austere and reduced as his.

His color has remained basically unchanged for years, and, in pursuit of perfection, he has also largely restricted his themes to portrait studies of women and children. In more recent times, however, he has gradually embraced a wider thematic range. His realistic compositions, somewhat earthbound and static in the earlier period, have taken on a pronounced degree of movement and dynamic puissance. In much of his newer work, conceived as details of mural compositions (for he still thinks and feels in terms of monumental art)—such as in his "Childbirth," "Fire" or "Andromeda"—realism is dramatically blended with a kind of elemental symbolism, lending his paintings an added significance and depth.

But much as in his earlier portraits of children, there is the charm of a wide-eyed wonder in everything he creates, mirroring the perennial wonder wherewith the painter himself seems to be contemplating reality.

FIRE. Oil.
By Jesús Guerrero Galván.



GRIEF. Oil.
By Jesús Guerrero Galván.

CHILDBIRTH. Oil.
By Jesús Guerrero Galván.





THE VILLAGE SWEETHEART. Oil. By Jesús Guerrero Galván.



ANDROMEDA. Oil.

By Jesús Guerrero Galván.



IMAGE OF MEXICO. Oil.
By Jesús Guerrero Galván.

Un Poco de Todo

ULTIMA THULE UP TO DATE

TIBI serviat ultima Thule," Virgil wrote, addressing his patron, the Emperor Caesar Augustus, with pardonable hyperbole. "Farthest Thule is subject to thee" was not literally true, for Rome at that time had not yet conquered Britain and the tradition was that Thule lay six days' sailing to the north of Britain. Agricola's Roman fleet, on its circumnavigation of Britain many years after Virgil wrote, sighted an island which they called Thule, but that must have been one of the Shetlands. Thule for centuries lay hidden in the mist of fable, but the idea of a remote island, the farthest outpost of human dwellings, fascinated the ancients, and some geographers put Thule on their maps near the Arctic Circle. It was a happy inspiration that gave the name to the settlement on the northwest coast of Greenland where the United States Government has just revealed a great air base, now ready to serve planes flying the shortest route between East and West over the top of the world.

Pytheas, Greek navigator of Massilia (modern Marseille), supposedly a contemporary of Alexander the Great, put Thule on the map. His account of his voyages has been lost, but later writers have preserved some of what he recorded, usually for the purpose of denouncing him as a faker. Pytheas sailed from Cadiz. He said he skirted the coast of Spain and France, landed in Cornwall, visited the famous tin depot at Ictie (St. Michael's Mount). He said that he circumnavigated Britain, toured extensively in the island and described its climate and its inhabitants. He capped his tale with the story of his visit to Thule, an island at the world's end where sea and sky and air merged into a spongy mass "like a jellyfish"—an impressionistic description, it is thought, of the fogs of the north Atlantic. Here at midsummer the paths of the sun and the Great Bear coincided, he said, and neither set.

Pytheas was responsible for the first controversy involving Arctic exploration, one which antedates the Peary-Cook affair by some 2,000 years. Strabo, the Greek geographer, a contemporary of Virgil, living in an age when men were becoming more critical, treats Pytheas very roughly, refusing to trust anything he wrote of his explorations. But Strabo was critical of all "marvel mongers," among whom he classed himself. Pytheas, Strabo admits was good at mathematics and astronomy, and he concludes that Pytheas could compose a likely story about Thule without ever having been near there.

Pytheas may well have been one of the many "marvel mongers" who have flourished in all ages. Thule as he describes it certainly never existed, but it never passed out of human imaginings and "ultima Thule" was enshrined in permanent literature by Virgil. The dictionary defines it as "any very distant, mysterious or mythical region, also a remote goal or end." Such regions are becoming rare. Thule, 930 miles from the North Pole, will soon be familiar ground to air travelers between northern Europe and western America. It will be more familiar to members of the United States Air Force based there to guard this continent against a surprise attack.

Thule has already changed Greenland from a semi-mythical land to a definite place in the scheme of

things. The huge island (or perhaps there is an archipelago under the ice cap) was best known for a long time as the place referred to in Bishop Reginald Heber's familiar hymn:

From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand,

But Greenland is much more than icy mountains. An article in a recent issue of "Foreign Affairs" by John J. Teal Jr., an expert on the Arctic, gives a clear picture what Greenland is. There are 300,000 square kilometers of ice-free land, more than seven times the size of Denmark, the mother country. Just north of Thule in Peary Land there is a great area of rolling hills and plains "vast stretches of wildflowers and grasses through which flutter several species of butterflies." In the southwest "the hills and valleys of the fjord districts are cloaked with grasses, wildflowers and berry bushes." Not a forbidding land. Thule has become a place of importance never dreamed of by the ancients. But our "ultima Thule," in the sense of "a remote goal or end," must remain a world in which huge military air bases are not necessary.

PREHISTORIC DATES ESTABLISHED

The third list of dates for important archaeological and anthropological discoveries was published last month in "Science" by Dr. W. F. Libby of the Institute for Nuclear Studies of the University of Chicago. The dates are those determined by precise measurement of the amount of radioactive carbon in a sample of a material that was living (and so storing carbon) centuries ago.

Some of the new datings for articles submitted by scientists in the field follow:

Flecks of charcoal, assumed to be from fires used by man, were found at an early age site near Kirkuk, Iraq. The site shows the earliest traces of an established food-producing village in the Near East, at the time when Near East civilization was beginning to rise. The flecks were measured to be 6,606 years old, with a probable error of plus or minus 330 years.

Two bits of charcoal and the shell of a bivalve, probably used for food, were recovered in an ancient site is about 1,200 miles south on the Nile River from which is near the city of Khartoum in the Sudan. The site were recovered in an ancient site (Shaheinab) the Egyptian Fayun, near Cairo. It may provide a clue as to whether some elements in the great Egyptian civilization moved into Egypt from Africa. Earlier radiocarbon dating of material from Fayum granaries showed it was 6,240 years old. The new charcoal from the Sudan is 5,960 years old, the bivalve shell 5,446 years.

Rock formations laid down near Reykjavik, Iceland, were permanently polarized (aligned) by the earth's magnetic field at the time of solidification of the flowing lava which formed the rock. The polarization pattern observed in the formation today is roughly parallel to the present magnetic field. How

Continued on page 44

Literary Appraisals

MUSIC IN MEXICO: A Historical Survey. By Robert Stevenson. 300 pp. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

THIS admirable survey of Mexican music, the first in English dealing with the entire subject, is an example both of fine scholarship and intelligent and engaging writing.

The bibliography is so formidable that it almost frightens the reader away from the text—though Mr. Stevenson does not merely parade his scholarship. He integrates it into the several sections into which the book is divided, so that each section emerges almost as a well-rounded essay. These sections have to do successively with the music of the Aztecs before and at the time of the Spanish conquest; the transplanting of European music into the colony; the rise and fall of this neo-Hispanic music; the music of the nineteenth century; and the final fulfillment during our own time. The circle has been completed, for the new Mexican music leans heavily on aboriginal sources.

Along the way Mr. Stevenson turns up some colorful material. For example: the Indians, taught European church music by missionaries, were apt pupils; so apt, indeed, that they were presently overcrowding the profession, and the prelates began to inveigh against oversized choirs and church orchestras. Also, the first books containing printed music in America were issued in Mexico in the sixteenth century. The first ascertained reference to the saraband was in a history of the Mexican Indians as far back as 1579 and indicates that the dance was of New World origin; and in another contemporary source the dance—this same one we think of now as so dignified and stately—was described as lewd and lascivious.

In matters of twentieth-century Mexican music Mr. Stevenson's book is not so complete, say, as Nicolas Slonimsky's "Music of Latin America." The latter conveys far more source material about twentieth-century Mexican music in approximately the same space. Mr. Stevenson acknowledges this fact in a footnote at the end of his book. In his behalf, however, it may be argued that he was not aiming at the same completeness. He has tried—if my supposition is correct—to present an integrated account of Mexican music, relating it to the other arts, to aboriginal culture, and even to Mexican political history.

M. S.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF HUNGER. By Josue de Castro. 337 pp. Boston, Little, Brown & Co.

DESPITE all of science's knowledge and trade's benefits, in our twentieth century two thirds of the world's population live in an unrelenting state of hunger. In "The Geography of Hunger," Josue de Castro, Brazilian-born chairman of FAO's Executive Council, recounts the details of human misery, region by region, launches a vigorous counterattack on the "neo-Malthusian" overpopulation theory, and comes up with a startling thesis of his own.

By hunger Dr. Castro means not only the acute starvation we see in times of famine, but also the more insidious effects of specific lacks of vitamins, calcium, iron, proteins, and so on. Singly and in combination, these are the causes of beriberi, pellagra, rickets, anemia, night blindness, and other assorted ills. The Western Hemisphere, even the United States, has its share of these deficiency maladies, as Castro points out.

With all his catalogue of disease and hunger, the

author remains optimistic. The novel theory he propounds is that hunger is the cause of overpopulation instead of its result. He cites some experiments on rats, in which animals fed on a low-protein ration proved themselves much more prolific than those on a high-protein diet. It is Castro's contention that inadequate protein consumption causes the liver to degenerate and fail to perform its function of inactivating excess sex hormones, thus increasing fertility. He also maintains that chronic hunger increases sexual desire. Feed the overcrowded peoples enough meat and milk, he argues, and their birth rates will go down as their productive efficiency goes up.

A table purports to correlate birth rates and daily consumption of animal proteins in fourteen countries, ranging from a high of 45.6 births per one thousand of population with a protein consumption of 4.7 grams in Formosa to a birth-rate low of fifteen with a 62.6-gram protein intake in Sweden. This list is not very convincing evidence, however. The last year for which the Formosa birth figure holds good, in the 1951 Demographic Yearbook of the United Nations, is 1935. The rate tapered off steadily since then to 40.7 in 1943, the last reported year. The figure given for the U.S. birth rate, 17.9, corresponds to 1940. Actually, the provisional rate for 1950 is 23.4. The table does not indicate the years or sources of the figures. It does not include any of the Central or South American countries. But in another chapter Castro mentions that the average annual consumption of meat in Peru is only thirty pounds, while in Argentina it is three hundred. Curiously, the birth rate in protein-rich Argentina in 1949 was only one point below Peru's for the same year, at 24.9.

While Castro accuses William Vogt and his coreligionists of inaccuracy and over-simplification in claiming that there is a limited "biotic potential" to every piece of land, that overbreeding is responsible for misery, and that erosion is destroying our best soil, he himself certainly oversimplifies the problem of high and low birth rates. It is obvious that many other factors than protein consumption have contributed to declining birth rates in the most industrialized countries. In the United States in the last century, with room to expand westward, farm families welcomed more children as helpers, but as the frontier disappeared and more people went to work in city factories or offices, big families became a burden instead of an asset. So the birth rate was affected by parent's wishes and not merely by their child-bearing capacity. Longer years in school, marriage at a later age, less illegitimacy, all are factors making for a lower birth rate in the better-fed countries. Just to complicate the picture, the declining U.S. rate jumped upward during World War II, and again after it, when North Americans were eating more meat than they ever had.

For inadequate diets and stunted growth in many parts of the world—the Caribbean, Africa, the U.S. South—Castro blames colonial or imperial insistence on production of export crops such as sugar and cotton, and restrictions on using land for growing essential foods. A diet of almost nothing but corn is responsible for the "sadness" of the Mexican Indian. Thousands of workers perished in the natural rubber boom in Brazil around the beginning of this century because they ate only dried or canned foods, which could not stand off the dread beriberi.

Puerto Rico, according to Castro, learned new misery under U.S. control because more land went into giant sugar plantations and food had to be imported from the United States at high prices. Vogt, of course,

blamed U.S. medical work for keeping too many Puerto Ricans alive as the population rapidly multiplied.

Castro carries the fight straight to the "neo-Malthusians," insisting that no country, not even China or India, is really overpopulated. With proper economic development and fair distribution, he claims, no one need go hungry, and birth control is unnecessary.

But he paints such a bleak picture of present conditions that his optimism seems unwarranted. "The first difficulty of Chinese agriculture," he writes, "is the relative scarcity of tillable soil; great areas . . . are too cold or too dry, too mountainous or too sterile, to make farming worth while . . . The concentration of humanity on the land reaches absurd extremes in the alluvial plains of the great rivers . . . The veritable mining of the soil of China creates the problem of micro-fundia, a threat as serious to the agricultural potential of the region as the opposite extreme is to Africa and Latin America . . ." Disease is spread because human wastes are used as fertilizer. If it were not used, production would be even less able to meet the population's needs. And it cannot be made safe by mixing with vegetable remains because they are needed for fuel. Nevertheless Castro concludes: "Considering that the geographic picture shows a country which needs above all to be exploited and economically mobilized by human labor, it seems a bit precipitate to speak categorically of overpopulation and to insist on the necessity of limiting material population growth by all possible means. Furthermore, as I have said before, there is no way of limiting growth of the Chinese population without first changing the whole economic and social structure of the country." If the job is as tough as all that, you would think Dr. Castro would be willing to get whatever help he could from voluntary population control to prevent new famines while the economic and social reconstruction is under way. But his point is probably well taken that such control

would not awaken the slightest response in the Chinese masses. He points out how vitally important it is to the whole world for the Chinese and everyone else to get enough to eat, but it is unlikely that outsiders will accomplish anything along those lines in the near future. How the present "Iron Curtain" division of the world into two hostile camps aggravates the food problem comes out also in Castro's discussion of Europe and of Japan.

In his section on India, Castro blames the English for doing nothing to improve the famine-marked food situation of the country in three hundred years of occupation. By prohibiting the importation of Indian cotton goods, England long kept her colony economically undeveloped and poor. Similarly, we could say that England took advantage of hostility between Hindus and Moslems, keeping it alive to prevent a united move for independence. A weird aspect of the Indian population problem was pointed out some years ago by B. R. Ambedkar, who later became Labor Minister of the Indian Government. He found that in Bengal, where the rival communities were very close to each other in numbers, Moslems and Hindus appeared to be trying to outbreed each other in order to gain majority control.

With modern farming methods, use of additional land, fairer land distribution and taxation, Castro feels, India could take care of her own. It is too bad that he does not bring the story up to date with mention of what independent India is doing about its food crisis.

* * *

The concluding section of Castro's book is shorter and not so well documented as his narration of the world's food troubles. He asserts that "the world has at its disposal enough resources to provide an adequate

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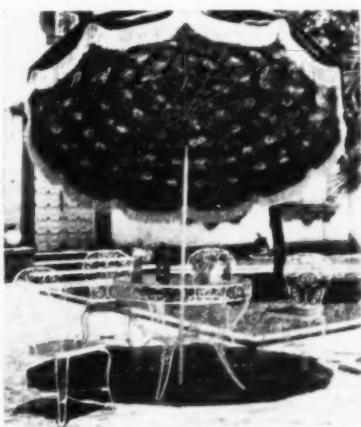
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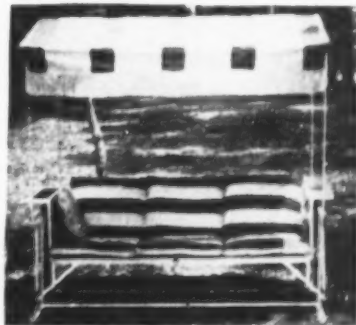
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diet for everybody, everywhere." He sees the solution in putting more acres under cultivation, in chemicals that stimulate plant growth or check weeds, in new sources of foods—he mentions the idea of making ocean plankton palatable or using algae to grow a new protein food.

Castro roundly condemns Vogt's cynical dismissal of the Chinese and his complete unconcern with man as an individual. "The neo-Malthusian doctrine of a dehumanized economy, which preaches that the weak and the sick should be left to die, which would help the starving to die more quickly, and which even goes to the extreme of suggesting that medical and sanitary resources should not be made available to the more miserable populations—such policies merely reflect the mean and egotistical sentiments of people living well, terrified by the disquieting presence of those who are living badly." Of course, you could read Vogt's words as a piece of gigantic irony along the lines of Dean Swift's Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to their Parents or the Country (by fattening and eating them), designed to shock people into action. You could, that is, if Vogt did not insist that his is a non-Aristotelian endeavor to express inexpressible reality.

Actually, despite their respective shortcomings, "Road to Survival" and this very different book are both useful. Josué de Castro calls for a vast program of economic and social development, but in it he cannot afford to overlook erosion or allow the creation of new dust bowls by cultivating where rainfall may be inadequate. The thing that makes "The Geography of Hunger" really important is the way it shows up the tremendous problem of feeding man properly and how little any government has done about it until the past few years.

G. C. C.

FROM SEA TO SEA IN SOUTH AMERICA. By W. T. Blake. Illustrated with thirty-three half-tone plates. 190 pp. New York, The McBride Company.

HERE is the account of a ten-weeks' journey, by automobile and rail, across lower South America from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back. It is happily unlike the more pretentious volumes on the continent which build a heavy house of conclusions on a rickety stiltwork of inadequate reporting.

W. T. Blake, veteran flier, traveler and journalist, works the other way. His pages are tack-sharp

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with observations on the five countries he and his wife purred, bounced, sloshed, crawled and sped through between Jan. 9 and March 19, 1951. And he leaves all conclusions to the reader—save one, which studs the text like a little label marked advt. This conclusion is that the British Vanguard, made by the Standard Motor Company, Ltd., is THE car for South America—or, for that matter, for anywhere else. By a rather friendly coincidence, there is a brief foreword by Sir John Black, deputy chairman and managing director of Standard Motor.

But commercialism aside, there is no doubt that on their punctureless 8,139 miles across pampas and over the Andes, through river beds and into jangling cities, the Blakes kept their eyes, ears and minds open. Their trip proper ran from Buenos Aires to Mendoza, then over the mountains to Santiago; up the desolate stretch of North Chile to Arica; then by rail to Bolivia's capital of La Paz, resuming the journey by car at the Argentine frontier point of La Quiaca. From here it was back to Buenos Aires, across the Plate to Montevideo, and up to Rio de Janeiro via Porto Alegre and Sao Paulo.

* * *

Mr. Blake falls over backward in his book in deference to the British sense of fair play. He says Juan Perón's railroad nationalization program did nothing to the Argentine system very different from what the Labor Government did to Britain's. And the Blakes' experiences in traffic on the day they got home to England are set down as harrowing compared to anything that happened on the odyssey over often primitive roads. It was in their own garage in Cornwall, they say, that they finally got the flat tire which the Vanguard had staved off all across South America.

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NAVAHO MEANS PEOPLE. Photographs by Leonard McCombe. Text by Even Z. Vogt and Clyde Kluckhohn. 155 pp. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

THIS is something different in picture books. Leonard McCombe is a good photographer; he is also, evidently, a natural reporter with a fine sense of story and endless persistence. Many of the photographs in this unique coverage of present-day Navaho life, from birth to death, from the medicine-man conducting a ceremony to the drunk unconscious beside the city garbage can, might be considered crude artistically. The "art" photograph, the beautiful arrangement, has of necessity been subordinated to the record of the fact, caught at the one moment it was offered.

Heaven only knows how he was able to get some of these shots. One would have expected him to be run out of the town of Gallup, or at least worked over by the police there, and certainly to be thrown out of the medicine lodge. This is the real story, told so that it really takes hold. It has what you don't like as well as what you do, and it includes some very handsome pictures indeed.

The story, if one can properly call such a grouping of pictures a story, runs from the old Navaho way of life, daily living, ceremonies, economy, to the Navaho in his varied contacts, good and bad, with the white man. The pictures show the Navahos at work off the reservation, their living conditions in the reservation-edge towns, and their relations with aspects of the Governmental control. The book goes on to some of the problems on the reservation itself, and finally back into the strength and potential development of the people themselves, with a heart-warming finale.

To all this has been added a text by Clyde Kluckhohn and Even Vogt, two of the top authorities on the Navahos today. The text is pertinent, ordered to correspond with the broad sequence of the pictures, and amazingly compact. These writers are Harvard anthropologists, yet their style here is a fine example of the power of simple English. It is clear, cogent, and pleasing to read.

I do not know of anything of this kind so effective, so worth having.

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Current Attractions

DRAMA COMES TO COYOACAN

By Vane C. Dalton

WHILE the ultimate desideratum of our hardy pioneers in the realm of drama is to truly popularize this art in our midst, to create a worthy and at the same time prosperous and truly popular dramatic stage in this bustling city of more than three million souls, the current and as yet incipient trend, by way of sundry "little theatres," seems to be directed toward exclusiveness, toward initially creating a sound appreciation and loyal following among the intellectually more advanced minority, the capital's smart set, or that to which our society columnists attribute the incongruously Slavonic designation of "popoff." And that, I suppose, is the way it should be, for the trend of popularity usually begins at the top and extends downward, rather than the other way around. The way of discovery and leadership is still, it seems, the privilege of the cognoscenti.

Meanwhile, in keeping with this trend, truly strange things are taking place—or I might say popping off—in our midst. The recently established Teatro de la Capilla (Theatre of the Chapel), situated an obscure little sidestreet of the somnolent suburb of Coyoacán, has become the abode of the finest dramatic attraction today available in the Federal District, an attraction which at the time of this reporting is approaching its hundredth presentation without showing signs of a boxoffice ebb. In fact, it seems to be just getting off on its way.

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The Teatro de la Capilla is the product of one man's daring enterprise and imagination—that of Salvador Novo, the gifted playwright and director who during the past six years and up to last December headed the Theatre Department of the National Institute of Fine Arts. Resigning his post with the change of the government, Novo decided to create an independent outlet for his multiple talents, and hit upon an idea, which from all rational considerations would seem verging on the fantastic, of acquiring an old discarded and ruined chapel with its adjacent grounds—a little edifice which probably dates from Colonial times—and of rebuilding it into a functionally perfect, cozy and comfortable miniature playhouse with a capacity for ninety-three spectators.

It is quite obvious that Novo did not pursue the aim of creating a sort of neighborhood theatre, for the population of Coyoacán can hardly provide even the nominal audience this little playhouse can accommodate, considering—if we may judge from the opening—play—the type of attractions he intends to present. This nominal audience must be gathered from all the farflung regions of the city. Hence, in selecting this odd site for his playhouse, Novo has, so to speak, gone away about as far as he could from his potential public instead of coming as close as possible



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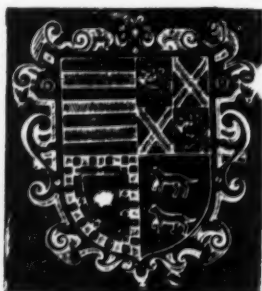
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to it. And yet, despite its remoteness, the Capilla has been crowded night after night since it opened, and not, I am sure, because its audience has been drawn from far and wide by mere curiosity or by the factor of novelty. It has been drawn by the veritable merit, the high excellence of the play enacted on its boards.

This play, by Cesare Giulio Viola, titled "El Presidente Hereda" ("The President Inherits") was translated from the original Italian into Spanish by Salvador Novo, and produced under his direction. Its theme presents a swift and tragic episode of disintegration of a middle-class Italian family brought on by the conflict between money and fundamental human values—between honorable poverty and dishonorable riches.

The plot involves an elderly judge of impeccable honorability, his wife, his maiden sister, a son and a daughter, both university students. The family, residing in a modest apartment in Rome, is mourning the sudden death of the judge's brother, a rich and somewhat mysterious person who lived in Milan. The deceased wills his entire estate, representing the great fortune of some twenty million lira, to his brother. It turns out, however, that this fortune consists of three prosperous brothels and of cash deposited in various banks and accumulated from the operation of these brothels.

Discovering this depressing truth, the judge refuses to accept the inheritance, whereupon it legally passes to his children, who in turn, contrary to their father's pleadings, and with their mother's consent, decide to accept it. Facing this disgrace and betrayal, the judge resigns his position and abandons his family, to spend his final years in solitary exile.

Though the projected conflict is as old as humanity, the story has a contemporary freshness; it bears

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a direct impact upon reality, in Italy as much as in Mexico: it is profoundly real and human. And this reality and humanness is brought out to the fullest degree in the truly excellent performance of the cast.

José Luis Jiménez enacts the role of the judge with an artistry that he has never matched in his previous roles. As a character actor his personality is unique on the Mexican stage. His poise and self-control are admirable; he has the supreme refinement, the talent for clearly and directly expressing the subtlest emotions without facial distortion, without emphasized gesture, with hardly ever raising the pitch of his voice. There is indeed no one quite like him in the Mexican theatre. Enjoying his splendid performance in this play brought back to my memory the remote vision of David Warfield in some of his celebrated roles of some thirty years ago.

A performer of his class, however, inevitably sets a rather difficult test for the supporting cast. But in choosing and training this cast Novo has fully coped with his problem. Each and every one of the performers—Pilar Souza, Rosa Furman, Rosa María Moreno, Angeles Marrufo, Carlos Bribiesca and Raúl Dantés—has been selected appropriately, and each renders his or her respective part with lifelike naturalness.

* * *

"El Presidente Hereda" and the Teatro de la Capilla not solely define a personal triumph for the gifted and venturesome Salvador Novo; they actually represent a highly significant contribution to the development of dramatic art in Mexico—a development wherein, I predict, the ancient borough of Coyoacán will henceforth play a quite important role.

Incidentally, it also practically corroborates the adage of the mousetrap—to wit, that if you have something really good to offer, people will come to you, no matter where you are.

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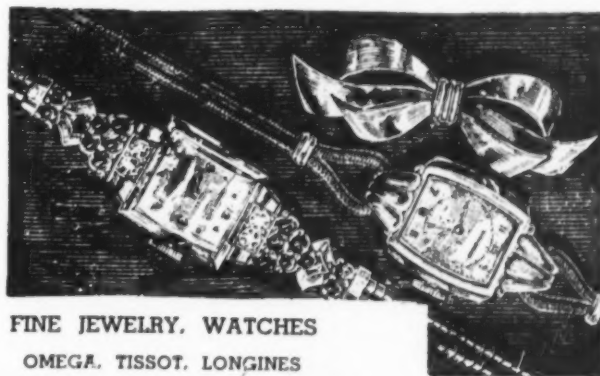
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Art and Personal Notes

GALERIA ARTE MODERNO is celebrating its fourth anniversary as well as its reopening in new and much more spacious quarters (Calle de Roma No. 21) with a highly interesting joint exhibition of paintings in oil by Jesús Guerrero Galván, ink drawings by G. Castro Pacheco, and serigraph prints by the French abstractionist Fernand Leger.

THE gifted Mexican painter Juan Soriano, who recently returned to Mexico from a year's sojourn in Europe, mostly in Italy, is showing a very impressive group of his newer works at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milán No. 180).

GALERIA PRISSE (Calle de Londres No. 163) is presenting at this time a collection of paintings in oil by the Spanish artist Francisco Tortosa. These are in large part Mexican landscapes, lush in coloring and designed in a kind of Gothic manner. Tortosa, who is in his late sixties, began to paint a few years ago by natural inclination, without formal training or guidance, and has since then exhibited his work on various occasions, arousing wide interest for his peculiar, quite personal style.

A COMMEMORATIVE exhibition of works by the late Spanish painter Carlos Ruano Llopis, who died in this city two years ago, is being offered by the Circulo de Bellas Artes de Mexico (Calle de Lisboa No. 48). The paintings which comprise this exhibit—genre themes of the bull-ring, landscapes and portraits—gathered from private collections, include some of the finest examples of this artist's work.

Beginning as an aficionado bull-fighter, Ruano Llopis eventually turned to painting and became famous in Spain and subsequently in Mexico for his vi-

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vid bullring depictions. During the twenty and some odd years he lived in this country, Ruano Llopis, dividing his time between painting and teaching, has exerted a lasting influence on quite a number of our younger native painters, among whom are such distinguished delineators of the fiesta brava as Solleiro and Espino Barros.

A VOLUMINOUS group exhibition restricted to still life themes is being presented during this month by the Galeria Romano (José Maria Marroquí No. 5). Sixteen artists are listed in the catalogue and their works, representational on the whole, define a wide variety of moods and manners.

Outstanding in this show are the canvases by Enrique Delauney and Carlos F. Vazquez; while those by Luis Sahagún, Rolando Arjona, Luz B. de Coarza, Ana Maria P. de Estañol, Armando García Nuñez, A. Rincon Piña and Teodoro Riveroll also deserve favorable mention.

A WELL CHOSEN group of paintings by various of our better-known local artists is currently on show at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154).

THE new art exhibit gallery, Casino de Arte (Calle de Milán No. 28) is presenting in the course of this month a selection of recent works by the local painter Lauro Lopez y Galván.

A COLLECTION of photographs by Tomas Moreno, staff photographer of the U.S. Embassy, are on show at the Mexican North American Cultural Institute (Av. Yucatán No. 63). The exhibit includes some striking effects in landscapes and portraits taken in Mexico.



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THE noted Chicago water-colorist Antimo Beneduce has been spending the past few months in Mexico, painting at Ajijic, Jalisco, San Miguel Allende, Gto., and in Mexico City. The paintings produced during this profitable journey will be exhibited in Chicago next June. A selection from these will appear in our forthcoming May issue, with a reproduction in color adorning the cover.

Editorial Note: The article "Watch Your Language," by N. Pelham Wright, which appeared in our October, 1952 issue, was reprinted from AMERICAS monthly magazine published by the Pan American Union in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Un Poco de Todo . . .

Continued from page 33

long has the earth's magnetic field been the same as is now is? Radiocarbon dating of Icelandic peat sealed off when the lava flowed and cooled over it, date the formation at 5,300 years old. The earth's field, thus, has not changed much in at least five millenia.

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A human skeleton from the Island of Tinian in the Marianas was found to show deformities characteristic of the tropical infection yaws. So the spread of both yaws and syphilis through the Pacific, according to this evidence, happened 1,098 years ago, plus or minus 145 years.

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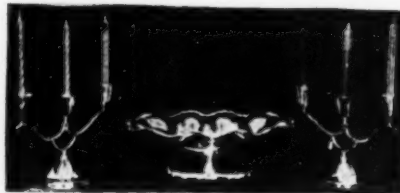
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Dating finds by the radiocarbon techniques of the chemist, as done at Chicago and in other laboratories, is confirming, and in some cases disproving, earlier theories about man's prehistory. It has added to man's knowledge of the earth by providing an immutable time scale for finds, though the archaeological work must still be done as always.

Primary Causes of Aging Unknown

At the request of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of Aging, Dr. V. Korenchevsky, head of the Nuffield Gerontological Research Unit of Oxford University, England, has prepared a report which Senator Thomas C. Desmond, chairman of the committee, accepts as a succinct statement on warding off the diseases that come with advancing years.

Dr. Korenchevsky reports that the basic, primary causes of aging are not yet known, nor is it known how they may be found. The reason is a wide range of obscuring secondary causes of aging, which include glandular deficiencies, hardening of the arteries and degeneration of the heart, liver, kidneys and other organs. Until science learns far more about these secondary causes of aging, it cannot determine the primary causes.

Dr. Korenchevsky declares that it is impossible to make old men young again, but that the administration of hormones can build up health and vigor and prevent senility and premature death.

When we first heard of the late Dr. Eugene Steinach's sex-gland operation and the late Dr. S. Voronoff's method of transplanting the gonads of anthropoid apes to aging men, we thought that the secret of rejuvenation had been discovered. No medical man



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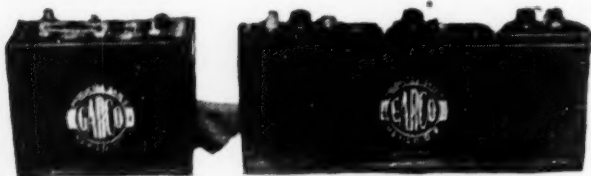
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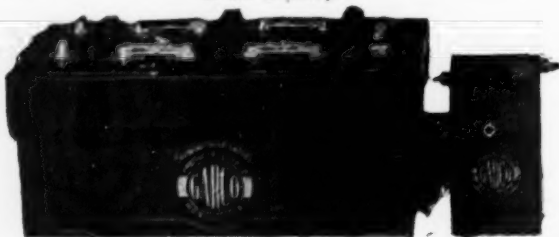
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believes that now. But there is still reckless administration of sex hormone extracts, a practice against which Dr. Korenchevsky warns. He approves of the administration of hormones only when there are specific hormonal deficiencies.

The evidence is strong that sex hormones can both stimulate and arrest the development of tumors. Hormone-produced tumors have been noted in rats, rarely in men and women. Deficiency in sex hormones may not be a normal part of the process of aging. Dr. Korenchevsky found that when aged rats were well housed and fed they retained their libido. If there are deficiencies of hormones, late in life, they may accelerate and intensify the processes of aging, but they must nevertheless be regarded as secondary causes of aging.

Recent experiments made by Dr. Korenchevsky indicate that hormones given to senile rats that need them improve physical tone. In fact, these treated rats are more vigorous than normal senile rats. Hormones given to hormone-deficient elderly men have ended depression and improved muscular activity. But only when there was a deficiency of hormones. When thyroid extracts are given to the elderly who need them, heart ailments and brain hemorrhage are often stayed off.

Male hormones apparently have an anti-aging effect on thyroids, kidneys, the heart, skeletal muscles and the metabolic rate, but they also have an adverse effect on the adrenals which lie on top of the kidneys. This adverse effect may be offset by administering several hormones rather than one.

Patterns of an Old City

Continued from page 20

a place for herself in a midst that had been turned upside down. She was confronting the trying problem, the imperative need, of salvaging something from the ruins. There was the old house in the city—the same house which now entertained this incongruous reunion—and various other properties, which supposedly had been looked after by some of her relatives

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but had been actually sadly neglected. Some were vacant, others were occupied by tenants who had not paid their rents for years, and all were burdened with a long and onerous backlog of unpaid tax.

The situation seemed almost hopeless at first; but she set out intrepidly and soon found a way out by means of mortgaging one property to save several others, and by restoring them all to a paying basis, until the holes were securely patched up and she could breathe at ease. And then her luck seemed to have turned at once, for by the time she had coped with her initial problems, the city, after years of inertia began to stir; construction was resumed gradually, real estate commenced to soar in value, and with this revival her own wealth underwent a rapid multiplication. The town property, which in bygone years had been a mere fraction of their estate, now became a quite important estate in itself. And astutely perceiving the trend of the times, she invested every cent she could raise in additional property, presently selling it at a higher price to reinvest the money in more property which in due time was also sold at a profit.

Hence, through such process of rapid accretion, at the end of some twenty years, Tia Luchita's property comprised a whole chain of buildings scattered in different parts of the city, whose proceeds in rents she invested in the acquisition of yet more property, thus further multiplying her fortune. And throughout this entire gainful process she was not impelled by mere greed; she was playing an exciting and agreeable game, until at last, when its proportions became entirely too large and the routine too exhausting for a woman of her advancing years, she wearied of it and found new satisfaction in partially foregoing her personal interests for those of others, found a pleasure in distributing a large portion of her bountiful income among her numerous and perpetually needy kin. Thus, in her old age, she enjoyed the fruit of her labor, of her acumen and luck; thus she happily rounded out her existence by creating around herself a small and dependent world, a world which she held in her benevolent power.

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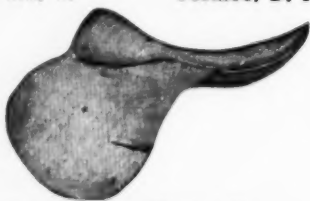
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And now, as she lay on her deathbed, this world was reaching its end.

* * *

Scattered in sundry groups they filled the sala and the dining room and the patio terrace, chatting in feigned amiability, or ignoring each other, and regardless of the disguise they wore, they were nervous and tense in their anticipation.

And as Licenciado Valladares watched this gathering of his deplorable kinsfolk, keeping to himself in a corner, the aversion he always guarded for them mounted to profound contempt. They were a despicable crowd of pusillanimous hypocrites, he thought as he looked them over one by one, of sorry nonentities, of pitiful failures, who in their twisted reasoning and puerile conceit regard me as the greatest failure of them all.

But then, he mused objectively, from their antithetical viewpoints they were all essentially right. They refused to acknowledge his intellectual superiority because in their opinion it has been lamentably wasted. Thanks to Tia Luchita's generosity he had enjoyed the privilege of a good schooling. He was a learned man, a graduate lawyer, and withal a professional failure, simply because he loved the noble substance of law and hated the sordid details which so often were involved in its practice. Unable, thus to exercise his profession he was yet able to teach as a University faculty member at twelve pesos a day, and to earn additional income writing essays on legal matters that were occasionally published in obscure magazines. His income was meager; but he needed little, and then there was always Tia Luchita upon whom he could rely whenever he found himself in actual straits.

A bachelor and celibate in his late forties, untidy of dress, sallow and angular of aspect, he seemed particularly repulsive to his cousin Beatrice, whose own vital pursuit had been mainly centered on the opposite sex. Starting out as something of a beauty, spoiled and bright, and probably lacking emotional stability, her many loves and various unlucky marriages, even now when she was beginning to show her age, did not entirely quell her verve and ardor. And it was the worldly wisdom and unfailing broad tolerance of Tia Luchita that helped her out of many a tangle and scrape.

She thoroughly despised the Licenciado Valladares, but she even more profoundly despised Rosalia, a remote cousin, the matronly, hard-working wife of a minor shop-keeper, a quite disgusting woman with



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whom she was compelled to share the sofa in the sala, and simulating friendliness engage in inane talk. The ordeal was the more irksome, for Rosalia, an obtuse and bovine type of female, seemed to be actually free of the animosity guarded by the others. She seemed unconstrained, even grossly unconcerned with the cause of their odd assemblage, and actually friendly as she cheerfully chattered on, skipping from one tedious and irrelevant subject to another, but mostly dealing with problems of running a household and bringing up four children on a sorely limited budget.

What an utterly abhorrent woman, Beatrice thought. A cow. A perfect cow. And the idea of bringing her gawky brats along to this house at a time like this! Getting into everybody's way. Making a mess of the place. A merry picnic. She is even too dumb to have come here on her own volition. She was obviously told to come here, sent here by her husband, by that paltry little merchant who owes whatever he is or has to Tia Luchita.

And yet, as trying as it was to endure Rosalia's company, Beatrice suffered it stoically, with a kind of masochistic abandon, enjoying at the same time a minute anomalous satisfaction that their apparent friendliness might cause annoyance and wonder among the others. And this perverse satisfaction was well founded, at least in the case of Don Andrés Alanís and his youthful companion Antonio Lugo.

Sitting across the room side by side in total silence, similar thoughts ran through their minds as they contemplated the two chattering women. What a bizarre combination, they thought. A bright hussy and a dumb saint. The impact of trivial virtue with refined evil. This, more or less, was the only thought they held in common, for above this thought each was gravely preoccupied with his respective problem and the turn it might take now that Tia Luchita's aid may no longer be available.

Don Andrés, who after thirty years of married life acquired a young mistress and could not obtain a divorce because the only condition upon which his

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wife was willing to grant it was to strip him of almost everything he had, had hopefully left his problem to Tía Luchita's solution. And now, he woefully surmised, his problem would remain unsolved, unless, of course, his share in Tía Luchita's legacy might in itself provide the solution.

And although Don Andrés was twice as old as Antonio Lugo, their problems, originating in love, were somewhat alike. For Antonio was deeply in love and desperately wanted to marry, though he was quite penniless and still lacked a year of finishing his studies at the engineering school. He had timidly exposed his situation to Tía Luchita only a few weeks before, and chiding him for his impetuosity she had nevertheless promised to provide the costs of the wedding and to increase his allowance until he was able to stand on his own. Antonio, torn with anxiety, would have liked to confide his problem to Don Andrés, but he hardly knew this distant uncle and was discouraged by his aloof and taciturn manner.

And surveying his surroundings he felt very much the same way toward all the other uncles, cousins and aunts, the many known and unknown people who, preoccupied with their own sundry problems, undoubtedly felt the same way toward him,—all the diverse inhospitable men and women who formed the incongruous gathering inside this somber house, and who beneath a mien that was either tense, impassive or apparently carefree were harassed by the same primary thought and were hiding the same preeminent query—How much? How much if any?—anticipating the final moment as if confronting fate itself.

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They came and went throughout the day, and some returned while new ones arrived; though none had been allowed by the attending physician to visit the room upstairs where Tía Luchita lay unconscious in her enormous bed. And presently the afternoon was waning and the servants switched on the lights and passed trays of black coffee and little cakes to relieve their weariness.

Then, when they were apparently the least prepared for it—when their enforced amiability had reached its peak, as if they were actually drawn to each other and becoming better acquainted, as if their common concern was no longer a burden, as if the problems they faced had been indefinitely deferred—the nurse, speechless and sternly placid of countenance, walked through the rooms waving her hand at them in a bidding gesture.

As eager as a crowd of hungry people summoned by a dinner bell, they thronged up the stairway and into the room and gathered thickly around the bed, hoping to hear something, wishing to say something; but Tía Luchita now reposed before them under the mask of final silence, and after a startled moment which echoed this silence all they could do was to utter a hoarse prolonged sound, a fused reverberating sound that contained no outcry and that was something between a mighty grunt and an unctuous sigh.

Uncle Cheto

Continued from page 29

every one of them Uncle Cheto was overwhelmed with ovations. At the end of the month he resigned his post and took leave of his friends of the ayuntamiento. His dear friends watched his departure with tears in their eyes. And nobody in that part of the country ever saw him again.

The chamulas were far from grieving at the money they had expended. They had been vouchsafed the privilege of possessing a golden bell clapper which



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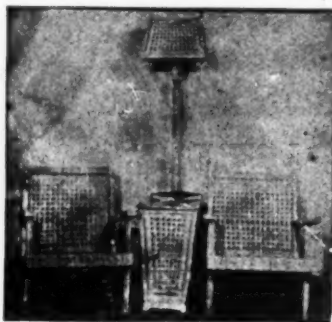
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had been blessed by the Pope himself, and all the other villages in the sierra were filled with envy. Even today, although all this happened many years ago, if you are present at one of their solemn fiestas, you will see the president bring out the bell clapper on a silk cushion and carry it in procession about the plaza amid the acclamations of the people, who bless the memory of Uncle Cheto, their benefactor—

"As you see, my friend," Don Ernesto concluded, "it is possible to make everybody happy and also gain riches for yourself, if you are a little ingenious—"

"And not overly honest!" I interrupted.

We sat for some time in silence. The night had come down over the sierra and the cicadas were intoning their monotonous, lulling song, while the breeze floated up from the river, laden with lemon-tea and pleasant singing. Two chamulas crossed the patio, and as they came abreast of us they called to my host:

"Good evening, Uncle Cheto!"

I jumped. Don Ernesto, sitting in the shadow, went on smoking his excellent cigar and laughed quietly.

Game Fishing in Mexico...

Continued from page 19

mackerel) and yellow tail are main catches until the red snapper comes along in May; and throughout the rest of the year there are multitudes of skipjacks, bonitos, flying fish and sardines. Shark are found everywhere, and not infrequent are barracuda, tuna and dolphin.

Years ago the great writer of western novels, Zane Grey, set a pattern for both Americans and Mexicans to follow in fishing the waters of Mexico. He fished the mighty, silver-flanked tarpon in the Tampico area; he fished sailfish out of Acapulco, and once even got his hook into a giant sea bass which "would have weighed at least 800 pounds... and was huge enough to swallow a man." Since the days of Zane Grey, American sportsmen have journeyed steadily to Mexico in pursuit of the thrills which are there to be had. They have brought with them the friendliness and good cheer which are typical of good sportsmen the world over, and have been met in turn by warm welcome—links in the bond of friendship between two great nations.



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Death, Fiestas and Music

Continued from page 25

figures of Judas, some of them life sized and loaded with firecrackers. Saturday morning after Good Friday they are strung up in one of the busiest streets of the city and blown up.

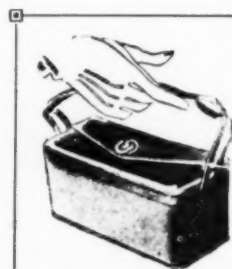
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When there is not a fiesta going on, there are always the official Mexican holidays with parades and demonstrations. Almost any reason is a good one to call a national holiday and to have a parade. Yet, despite all this, the Mexicans, whom we think of as fun-loving, happy-go-lucky people, really enjoy the tragic and the dramatic. November 2, the Day of the Dead, which would be a solemn occasion almost anywhere else, is a gay holiday in Mexico. People paint skulls and bones on walls and bake special types of bread. The candy stores feature in their windows decorated sugar skulls for gifts. Even in the humblest hut it is a day for feasting and for the families to gather together.

It is also the day (actually, it continues for a week) for the staging of that traditional Spanish drama, Don Juan Tenorio. For centuries the play has been given during this holiday and year after year practically the same people go to see it. The children also attend even though it frightens them. Don Juan Tenorio revolves around two members of the Spanish nobility, who have no ambition but the pursuit of feminine seduction. The more difficult the greater the prize, until finally a young virginal nun in a convent becomes Don Juan Tenorio's objective. Eventually he succeeds, but not without killing half the cast including the seduced nun. This tragedy of tragedies ends in a cemetery with those who are dead returning as ghosts to haunt the seducer. He stabs himself following a discourse on moral retribution. After his death he is shown with the nun, both of them angels in heaven. The Mexicans love it. Their children never forget it.

Not so gay but much more dramatic is the ceremony for the Feast of the Dead which takes place on the tiny island of Janitzio in Lake Pátzcuaro. Once every year, at midnight, the women, their heads covered with black rebozos and each with a food basket, walk to the cemetery in the front courtyard of the church. Over the graves of their dead they light candles and spread the food and lay out bottles of wine and tequila. They sit there motionlessly waiting until the sun shines across the lake and the bells of the church began to toll. There is always a depressing stillness, except for the waves washing up on the shore and the occasional cry of one of their men getting drunk in a cantina close by. The men seldom come to the cemetery. They prefer to get drunk and to forget.

I have called these demonstrations and ceremonies fiestas because that word is now generally used to signify them. The true meaning, however, of the



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Spanish word fiesta is a gay, happy celebration. As we have seen, none of them fit easily into this definition. Most of them are somber, deeply religious affairs which probably have a psychological significance. In concept and in execution, time has changed them very little.

Indian Intlude in Mexican Architecture

Continued from page 22

the town spread out over the uplands dominated by those two volcanoes; while across the highway an infinitely lesser hill is crowned by two sacred temples. A zigzagging cobblestone walk leads up that "sacred mountain" with its Stations of the Cross on the way, where pilgrims stop to kneel as they climb. Each station is a small Classical monument with pilasters supporting a pediment crowned with a cross, while on the face is carved another cross with incised inscriptions. Stately old cypresses with Spanish moss clinging to their branches serve as a background for these little classical monuments, or, if one is not too devout to turn his head from views of the great snow-covered peaks to the east.

* * *

Where now stands the small church with tower and dome snuggling close together once dwelt Fray Martín de Valencia, "Father of the Mexican Church," who took up his abode in a cave on that hill. Greatly revered by the Indians, he was afterwards buried at that spot and became a "santo." According to local legend, when some muleteers were carrying images to be sold in Amecameca, one of the mules broke away and ran up to that cave on the "Sacro Monte." When he refused to budge, his load was unstrapped, and it was found that he carried a life-size image of Christ so light in weight that it could be lifted by a child. This was interpreted as a divine command to build a shrine at that doubly sacred spot.

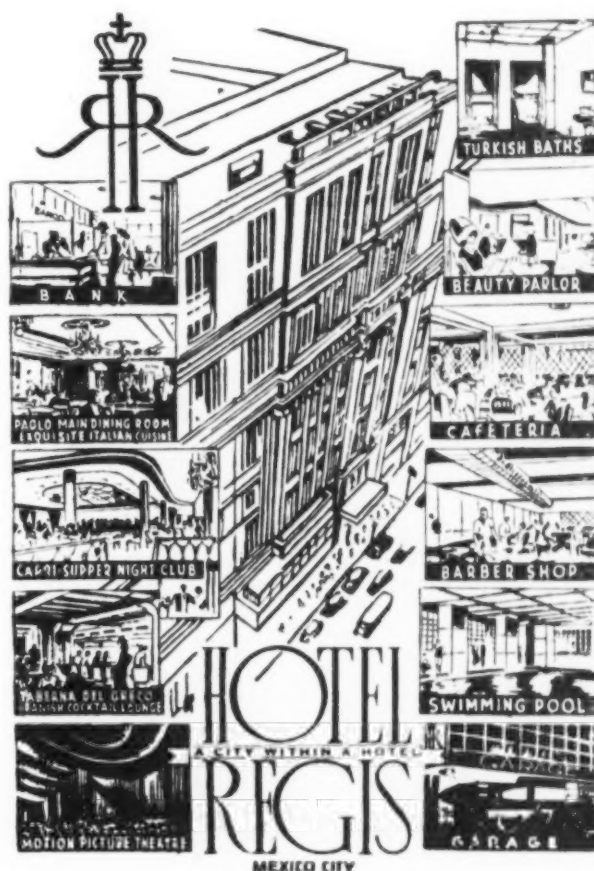


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Higher up, where once stood the Temple of Teotihuacán, is another shrine, dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe. The people of Amecameca claim that the Virgin had really appeared there first, but because they did not build a suitable shrine she left in indignation to reappear before Juan Diego on another hill. When a church of stone was built for her she relented, and once a year, in September, on the anniversary of the day when she originally appeared there, she comes again to the people of Amecameca; and the day on which she returns happens also to be a day which was of great religious import before the white man came to Mexico.

But most revered of all shrines in Mexico is that of the Virgin of Guadalupe at Villa Madero, at the foot of the hill where the Aztec goddess Tonantzin had formerly been worshipped. The subtle transference of the cult of Tonantzin to that of the Virgin is a supreme example of the wisdom of the early missionaries in deftly achieving the conversion of the natives to make it appear their own idea. Nowhere is there a patron saint closer to the hearts of the people than is the Virgin of Guadalupe to the hearts of the Mexicans. She is to be found everywhere in Mexico—in shrines, in prayers, in song; in stone, in plaster, in pastry; on postcards, on sombreros, on matchboxes, and painted on the mirrors behind bars. I have succumbed to her charm. She stands, on tile, in my kitchen; blown in glass, on my window sill; and carved in wood, on my mantel. To all Mexico she is "Our Lady of Guadalupe," but she is also Tonantzin, which in Aztec means, fittingly enough, "the Mother of God."

All of this love of show and of pageantry, and of ritual and the necessary setting for ritual, both on the part of the Spanish Catholic and the semi-converted Indians, and the ready acceptance of miracles and the zeal for building shrines to commemorate them was reflected in the increasing number and increasing elaboration of churches. The architectural forms were Spanish, following the trends of the mother country, but with the colorful Christian-Pagan religion, and the New World wealth, they developed into a style which eventually took the lead and became truly Mexican.

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Once the Indian had become fairly well subjugated and it was no longer necessary, through fear of him, to build the fortress type of church and monastery, new architectural forms came into being. The growing wealth of the country, of which the Church received a large share, made possible an increased indulgence in these forms, which eventually grew into the elaboration of the latter part of the eighteenth century, but which began to manifest itself in certain characteristics at an early date.

The outstanding feature of this expansion was the dome. Most of the earliest fortress churches did not have domes. The typical form, as at Huejotzingo and at Acolhuan, for examples, was an arched roof of tile, structurally the upper surface of the vaulted ceiling, however, not a false roof. In some examples, as in the Cuernavaca Cathedral, the rudiments of a dome are evident, and in San Jerónimo Atotonilco an almost half-dome appears, these were also truly structural, arched of solid masonry. Once adopted, they were almost universally employed, until there was scarcely a village that did not have a domed church. They are to be found in the country literally by the thousand and remain the country's dominating architectural feature. It has been said that there are more fine domes in Mexico than in all the rest of the world put together.

The earliest domes were low and rather flat, in the first examples scarcely visible above the battlemented parapet; but as the battlemented parapet could be abandoned they soon grew into a variety of more conspicuous forms. The octagon was the usual shape, with the arch springing directly from the level of the roof. In the more developed state, dormer windows were built in each section, to light the interior, sometimes of such height as to appear as a drum, a feature which followed in the later domes. The nineteenth century introduced drums of two stories. Unlike the typical Renaissance domes of Europe, these domes were nearly always singles in construction, with but one shell, following the same lines both on the exterior and on the interior, and were crowned by the inevitable Renaissance lantern. In their developed state, domes were embellished with colored glazed tiles, often in rich patterns of stars, sunbursts, or chevrons, and, as they glisten in the sunlight, form an outstanding and characteristic feature of the landscape which can be found nowhere else as in Mexico.

As in the case of the palaces, most of the churches of the sixteenth century which were built in the



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larger cities have either been torn down to make way for later and larger edifices or have been so remodelled that little is left of the original structures. In Mexico City, the once great group of San Francisco, though one of the first churches or groups of churches to be begun, was not completed until late in the eighteenth century, and practically nothing remains of the sixteenth-century work. In the outlying towns, in addition to the great fortress monasteries, many lesser structures were built, and occasionally one finds a small church with a Plateresque entrance dating from the sixteenth or early seventeenth century; but in the national capital and in such important cities as Guadalajara, Puebla, and Oaxaca, there is scarcely a church built in the sixteenth century, with probably much of both Gothic and Plateresque, that has not given way to a later structure, built when those early styles had been overtaken by the Baroque.

December Evening in Taxco

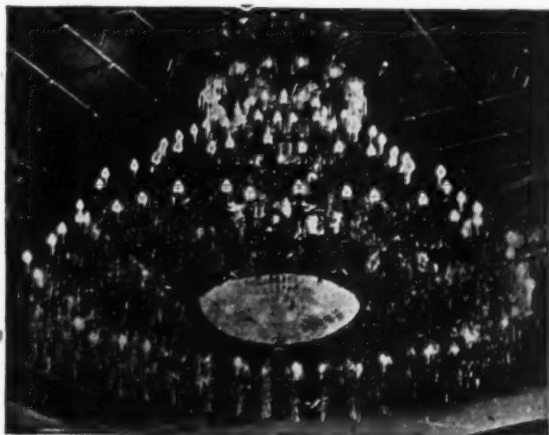
Continued from page 16

on the cobblestones as a burro train returned from another mine in the higher mountains.

Although Taxco is a place where its eight thousand inhabitants really work, it is called the Fiesta Town, because its people are also much given to play. Its citizens seem gayer in spirit than those in most Mexican towns. The soft-voiced, nubile girls, and the deep-bodied women, who wash and slap-dry their clothes in the open public washing-stalls, do not suffer from male neglect when evening comes. Much time is consumed in the pursuit of love-making in Taxco. Romance lies in wait at the foot of any street, on the next bench under the laurels.

In the last decade, besides being a prime tourist attraction, Taxco has become a rendezvous for serious artists—Mexican, American, European—with the usual hangers-on of the Muses. A few of them, as sometimes happens in the best artistic circles, had come trailing lavender wisps of gossip. I had noticed young Max staring quizzically, with a faint contemptuous sneer on his lips, as men came and went on the gallery or in the bar.

As we started to the Borda for dinner, down a winding cobbled street came a procession of lighted candles and voices chanting "Ave Marias." Four children preceded, carrying a decorated litter in which lay images of the Virgin, Joseph and an angel. Young folk were going to a "posada"—the eighth and next to the last of the Christmas season. Before a closed doorway farther on, other persons were lined up two by two, and through a gateway we saw guests already arrived and standing in a patio with lighted candles.



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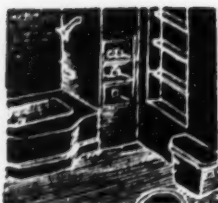
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All over Mexico, in every strata of society, "posadas" were in progress—they had been going on since December sixteenth. For more than two centuries, the "posada" has been a Mexican custom, shared by rich and poor. Literally, the word means an inn. It symbolizes the search of Joseph and Mary for a night's lodging when they went from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be inscribed for the new Roman taxation decreed by Augustus Caesar for all the dependencies. The little town of Bethlehem was so crowded with people come for the same purpose that the pair could find no house in which to lay their heads, and so they wandered for nine nights and finally took shelter in a stable just in time for the infant Jesus to be born.

When the "posada" guests arrive, the electric lights are extinguished. With lighted candles in their hands the guests march to a closed door and beg in song to be admitted. Keepers behind the door or from an upper balcony refuse admittance, in song. Then the Josephs and Marys sing weariness and the discomforts of the cold night. At last Mary reveals her identity as the Queen of Heaven. The door is ostentatiously unlocked, the guests file laughingly through, and pause to kiss a doll that represents the newborn Jesus reposing on a bed of flowers. Then they gather in a circle about a "piñata," an earthenware jar, which is suspended from the ceiling. An honored female guest is chosen to break the "piñata" with a wand, whereupon fruit and candies and toys spill over the floor, and the guests squeal surprised delight as they scramble and grab. If the hosts are poor, there is no more to the party. If they are rich and in the city, there may follow a ball and a supper at home or at the country club—and instead of fruit, corsages of orchids and bougainvillees of gardenias cascade from the "piñata." The custom and performance of the nine "posadas" Madame Calderón de la Barea found "extremely pretty" back in 1841 when she came to Mexico as the wife of the first Spanish Ambassador. She was a bit perplexed, however, as foreigners are today, by "the curious mixture of religion and amusement." But foreign residents in Mexico have learned to follow the custom; and they too give "posadas," as well as attend them.

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After dinner that evening, we sat long into the night on the hotel's open terrace enjoying *dolce far niente*. Some towns seem more open than others to the stars, and Taxco is one where stars assume especial brilliance. The December heavens were as thick with them as Danish beech forests are with white anemones in May. We watched the lights in the houses across the barranca gradually go out one by one. The Day-shift miners, the silversmiths, the washerwomen, the muledrivers, the merchants, went to bed, all except those invited to the two private dances that had hired the town musicians.

In the peace of Taxco we had forgotten for some hours the stupendous strife in the outer world. A clock struck midnight. We got up from the long chairs to go to bed. It was the morning of Christmas Eve—the period of special observance of goodwill in the Christian world. A distant cock crowed and another answered, and another, like eerie echoes running up the hills. From somewhere in the near flowering shrubs a Mexican mocking bird began a flutelike trilling. Across the barranca came the music of a "corriendo el gallo." Local troubadours were serenading under some señorita's balcony. It is called "the serenade of the cock" because it takes place after first cock's-crow. There were no artificial lights anywhere now. But the illumination from the multitudes of stars bathed the twin-towered church in silver radiance with a *chiaroscuro* of star shadow that accentuated the misty outlines. The peace of the hour was perfect.

To Alamos for the Mail

Continued from page 12

seemed foreign to the regular sound of the rapid above, and saw that it was made by a very large fish, trying to jump the waterfall. He tried again and failed, but the third time he made it. Presently, another and still larger fish appeared and made se-

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veral unsuccessful attempts at the fall. I suddenly got very hungry for fish. I had nothing in the way of fishing tackle, nor anything that I could convert for the purpose, not even a pin to bend for a hook; so I had to sit and watch several more of these finned beauties go on up stream. They seemed to be migrating for upper waters, like salmon. Then I thought of it—I had a twenty-five automatic in the saddlebag with my lunch, and with luck I might shoot one of the "darned" things. The sportsmanship of the setup didn't enter into the deal at all. I was simply hungry for fish.

I got out the little pistol and crouched as near to the waterfall as I could, in hope that another fish would come to the surface. Then I happened to think that I had better make some provision for retrieving him, if I shot him. Hurriedly, I undressed and crouched, naked, watching the water for my prey. It was just then that the old man saw me for the first time, and let out a startled grunt. He wasn't exactly expecting a naked man with a gun in his hand to appear like that.

He started to say something, but just then I saw my quarry. He was a beauty. I knew he wouldn't be able to make the fall the first try; so I watched him, to determine the exact point where he slowed up and started to slide back. This would be the right time for a shot. The second time, I was ready for him with a bead drawn on the approximate spot where his black back would come out of the water. His head came under my sights and I pulled the trigger, dropped the gun on the rock, and raced to the quiet part of the pool to retrieve him. Sure enough, he came floating down, and I grabbed him. I thought I had heard considerable commotion during this brief period, but I had been too occupied to look up. Now, I suddenly became aware of the fact that I was far from alone. The two girls had come rushing through the brush to see if their father had been shot, and the old man was simply standing there petrified. He looked awfully funny, for he had just lathered himself all over. Suddenly he seemed to come to. He let out a sort of squeak, and took off like a scared jackrabbit, leaving a trail of flying lather. The girls followed at top speed, forgetting that they were still as naked as I. I thought about trying for another fish, but decided that this four-pounder was plenty for a good meal, and fish do not keep well in this climate; so I dressed and got ready to leave.

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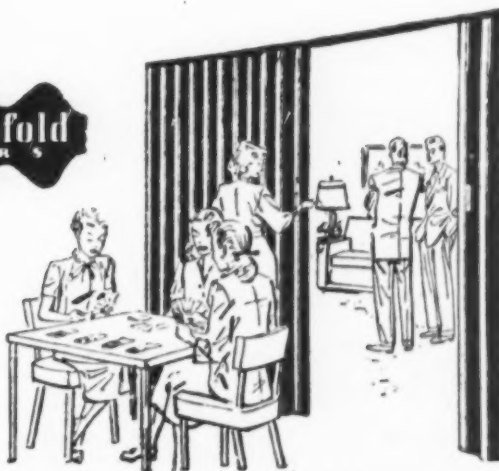
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As I emerged from the brush, on my horse, I met the party I had frightened so badly, face to face. They looked startled, but stood their ground. I rode up and introduced myself and explained that I had only been shooting a fish.

"But Señor", the old gentleman said, "you can't shoot fish."

"Yes, I can," I replied, reaching into my saddle-bag and drawing forth my prize. Then the girls started to laugh. I did not know what they were laughing at, but I laughed too. Presently the old fellow was chuckling and muttering something about the "unpredictable Americano."

We rode into Alamos, together, and the way did not seem half so long, for the girls kept up a friendly banter and occasionally broke into some of their favorite songs. It seemed to please even the old man when I was able to help with a few that I knew.

A little way out of town, the girls stopped, took off their "guaraches," and put on shoes and stockings from out of the bags they carried behind them on the burro. They had already put on their best dresses after their bath at the arroyo, and the old man had changed to a clean white pair of trousers and white shirt. I felt a little shabby riding into town with them, for they certainly put their best foot foremost.

That is one mistake that we Americans are likely to make in this country. These people try to look their very best when they ride into town, and we are apt to come dragging in, needing a shave, covered with dust, and wearing clothes we wouldn't be caught in, at home. Anyway, if they resented my appearance, they didn't show it. We finally topped the last hill and Alamos lay in the valley below, bathed in a magic rose-colored light; for the sun was just setting. It looked like something out of a fairy story, some lovely city made of mother-of-pearl and coral.

My companions stopped to look, as I did. The girls did not gush, as a couple of Americans would, trying to impress me with their appreciation of the beauty. They just said "Que bonito Alamos" and sat and watched the colors change and fade in silence. I couldn't say anything; Alamos, at sunset, seems to affect me that way.

I said good-by to my traveling companions in the plaza and soon had my horse hitched in the alameda in front of the Dow house. Don Fredrico and his wife, Lolita, welcomed me at the door. Fred started kidding me about anybody who would stoop so low as to shoot a poor defenseless fish, while his wife, who had already appropriated my trophy, was busy, in the kitchen explaining to the cook just how to bake it with tomatoes, onions and a little chili.

I was tired and a little stiff, but mighty glad that I had decided to ride to Alamos for the mail.

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Poco a Bust

Continued from page 14

is not an indication of an impending outbreak; it comes from the burning sulphur deposits on the sides of the crater. In the days of the conquistadors Cortés' soldiers extracted sulphur here for making gunpowder.

It was recently proposed that a cable car be installed to carry passengers up to the crater rim. Whatever its merits, the idea met with a storm of protests from alpinists and the general public alike. The Mexican people were evidently unwilling to disfigure the ancient mountain that had been the "Warrior" of Aztec legend, standing guard over Ixtaccihuatl, the "Sleeping Woman." The artisans of Tlaquepaque still carve those legendary figures as table decorations. The volcanoes themselves can be seen painted on the sides of ice-cream vendor's carts anywhere in Mexico, and a more grandiose version of the same scene appears on the twenty-two-ton glass screen for the stage of the Palace of Fine Arts in the capital. This was made by Tiffany at a cost of forty-seven thousand dollars.

Of course the night of October 11 is the time to make the Popocatepetl trip if you want to see the big show. But if you can't make it then, you will still find it very much worth while to drive up to Tlamecas any day of the year over the good dirt road maintained by the Mexican National Parks. The spectacle of the glistening cone standing above the magnificent Valley of Mexico is incomparable.

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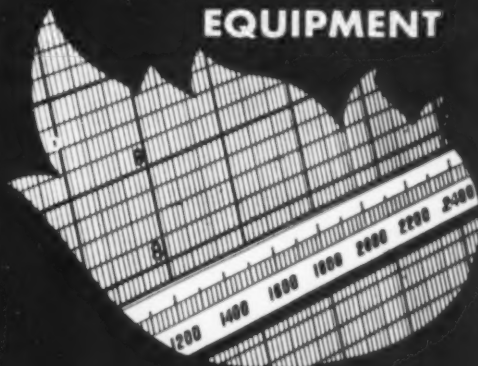
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D. MOLLINEDO

Filemona

Continued from page 10

he did had its bad side. For weeks the tug of war went on.

One morning Alberto appeared at the kitchen door and thrust a bouquet of flowers at his wife. "For your Señora," he said abruptly, and was gone. Filemona was radiant. The gesture meant that he had accepted the new state of things.

For me Filemona took on a new dimension. I guessed the strength and wisdom behind the shy dark eyes that begged me for still one more chance. And when the house agent telephoned that he had found a jewel of a cook, I staggered him by turning her down sight unseen.

...

Alberto had been permitted to make his home on the estate where he worked, in a corner of the garage yard. Passing through on my visits to his mistress, I used to catch glimpses of his family life, and Filemona's. There was Alberto's witch-like mother, Mama Grande, who spoke only a Nahuatl dialect and took her monthly bath in a tin washtub in the open; Sarita, the eldest daughter, lent over the laundry; the two babies, Moisés and Luz, rolling in the dirt among the dogs and chickens.

"They live like animals and don't want to live any better."

One evening I stopped short just behind a screening hibiscus bush. Alberto was saying, "Sarita is eleven, old enough to work."

Filemona, facing him and Mama Grande, looked small and humble. "Please, Alberto, let me send her

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to school. I will work hard. I will pay what is needed."

Mama Grande spat out a single word that made Filemona gasp and shuffled off, her bare feet raising little puffs of dust.

"If Sarita goes to school," said Alberto, his eyes following his mother, "she will go away. Who then will look after the children?"

"Let her go. She will come back," Filemona said.

On the day Sarita started school, Mama Grande left, walking down the road with the small bundle of her clothes wrapped in her rebozo. But in a week she was back. "She loves my little Moisés," Filemona explained. "He is her life."

Now I knew that every night, in the miserable hovel dominated by the acid-tongued old woman, Filemona fought against the dead weight of centuries. Nothing of this grim and lonely battle showed in her face, except that on some days her smile was forced. Those were the days when Sarita, abetted by her grandmother, stayed away from school.

The years passed. Filemona became a good cook. I took to reading her recipes out of American cook-books, and she miraculously produced Irish stew, honey-flavored baked ham, and beef a la Stroganoff. When I bought a can of baked beans, Filemona, shocked at the price, analyzed the contents and created the dish we ever after called, to her delight, frijoles a la Filemona. Developing a passion for cleanliness, she bathed every afternoon and washed the dress she had worn the day before. Her shapeless old dresses gave way to cheery cotton prints. She experimented with attractive hair-do's.

But at night she went from my big house to her two rooms full of babies—she had had two more—and Mama Grande's fury. Torn between his mother and his wife, Alberto was drinking heavily. Filemona lost friends; sharp-tongued gossipers, led by Mama Grande, said that Alberto's woman was putting on airs. But Sarita was still going to school.

I left Mexico, and it was two years before I saw my "home" again. Nothing was changed. The roses, the jacaranda above the sparkling blue swimming pool, the candy town across the barranca, the three peaks on the sky—all were as they had been the first day.

The kitchen door opened. "Buenos días, Señora."

It was not the Filemona who had desperately lied. "I can make kidneys in wine." This was a woman of



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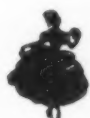
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poise and assurance. She glowed with an inner beauty.

For she had won. Sarita, graduating, was ambitious to become a nurse and midwife. It meant three more years of hard work and sacrifice for Filemona. Two-thirds of her wages must now be set aside to send the girl through medical apprenticeship. But what was that to a woman who, single-handed, had bridged the past and the future?

Although we are old friends now, sharing many confidences, Filemona remains the perfect servant. She still refuses to sit down when I am talking to her. She lets nothing interfere with her work. When I proudly introduce her to my guests, she does not presume; smiling the polite greeting, she withdraws to serve.

But the other day she came to me in the sala, unbidden. "You are invited," said Filemona, "To my daughter's fifteenth birthday fiesta."

Only then did I realize that full heroic measure of her accomplishment. Every Mexican girl dreams of the quince años debut—the gown of frills and ruffles, the fashionable party, the pictures in the Sunday papers. Sarita's party would not get into the papers, but her mother's social world would recognize that the servant's daughter had come of age in a sense deeper than that of the calendar.

Filemona spent twenty-five laboriously saved dollars on Sarita's long white dress and satin pumps, another twenty-five on the party. It was a splendid fiesta, with crepe-paper decorations, a one man marimba orchestra, wine and tequila for the grownups, and fruit punch for the youngsters.

Alberto muttered that it wasn't a proper fiesta because nobody was getting drunk, but he was every inch the proud father, hero of the evening. Even Ma-ma Grande's seamed, embittered face looked almost genial. And Sarita floated in her wide skirts as through a dream.

But Filemona, moving serenely among guests who were once her enemies, was the happiest woman in Mexico.

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